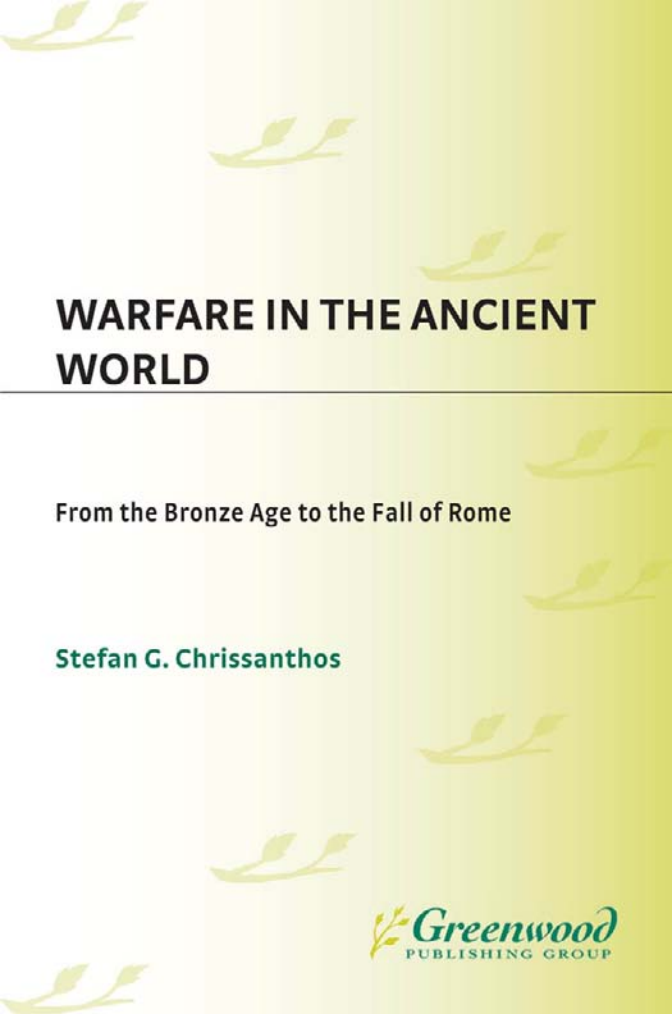


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WARFARE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

From the Bronze Age to the Fall of Rome

Stefan G. Chrissanthos

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WARFARE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

From the Bronze Age to the Fall of Rome

Stefan G. Chrissanthos

Praeger Series on the Ancient World
Bella Vivante, Series Editor

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To my parents, who have supported me since the beginning; to my wife,
a constant source of inspiration and support; and to Korena and Nikolaos,
whose love makes everything possible.

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Series Foreword

The lives of ancient peoples may seem far removed, socially, linguistically, and especially technologically, from the concerns of the modern world. Yet the popularity of historical subjects on both the big and little screens—*Troy*, *Alexander*, *300*; HBO's *Rome*, the many History Channel programs—demonstrates the abiding fascination the ancient world continues to exert. Some people are drawn to the dramatic differences between the ancient and modern; others seek to find the origins for contemporary cultural features or the sources to provide meaning to our modern lives. Regardless of approach, the past holds something valuable for all of us. It is literally the root of who we are, physically through our actual ancestors, and culturally in establishing the foundations for our current beliefs and practices in religious, social, domestic and political arenas. The same ancients that we study were themselves drawn to their own pasts, often asking questions similar to the ones we pose today about our past.

The books in Praeger's series on the Ancient World address different topics from various perspectives. The ones on myth, sports, technology, warfare, and women explore these subjects cross-culturally, both within the ancient Mediterranean context—Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, Rome, and others—and between the ancient Mediterranean cultures and those of the Americas, Africa and Asia. Others, including the volumes on literature, men, sexuality, and on politics and society, examine their topic more specifically within a Greek or Greek and Roman cultural framework.

All renowned scholars committed to bringing the fruits of their research to wider audiences, each author brings a distinctive new approach to their topic that differentiates them from the many books that exist on the ancient world. A major strength of the first group is their multi-cultural breadth, which is both informative in its comprehensive embrace and provides numerous opportunities for comparative insights. Likewise, the books in the second group explore their topics in dramatically new ways: the inner life of male identity; the contributions of both women and men to the social polity; the ancient constructions of concepts of sexuality and eroticism.

Each volume offers amazing windows into aspects of ancient life. Together, the series provides an invaluable overview of how ancient peoples thought about themselves and the world, how they conducted their lives, and how they expressed their views in creative terms. Enjoy the journey into the past that each one provides.

Bella Vivante
Series Editor
Praeger Series on the Ancient World

Warfare Timeline

3500 B.C.E.	Rise of civilization in Mesopotamia
3100	Rise of Egyptian civilization
1652–1551	Hyksos invasion and occupation of Egypt
1650–1180	Hittite civilization in Anatolia
1600–1100	Mycenean civilization in Greece
1570–1567	Reign of Kamose
1567–1542	Reign of Ahmose I
1551	Hyksos driven out of Egypt; New Kingdom begins
1458–1425	Reign of Thutmosis III
1457	Battle of Megiddo
1293–1271	Reign of Muwatallis II
1279–1213	Reign of Rameses II
1274	Battle of Qadesh
1213–1202	Reign of Merneptah
1200–1100	Collapse of the Bronze Age world
1194–1184	Trojan War (according to the ancient Greeks)
1186–1154	Reign of Rameses III
1179	Destruction of Ugarit
1100–800	Dark Age in Greece
814	Carthage founded

800–500	Archaic Age in Greece
753	Foundation of Rome
750	<i>Iliad</i>
746–727	Reign of Tiglathpeleser III
740–720	First Messenian War
722–705	Reign of Sargon II, zenith of New Assyrian Empire
720	<i>Odyssey</i>
660	Second Messenian War, Spartan conquest of Messenia
650	Development of <i>hoplite</i> panoply and <i>phalanx</i>
616–509	Etruscan rule in Rome
612	Destruction of the Assyrian Empire
559–530	Reign of Cyrus II king of Persia
549	Persia conquers Media
546	Persia conquers Lydia
540	Persia conquers Ionia
539	Persia conquers Babylonia
530–522	Reign of Cambyses II
522	Persian conquest of Egypt
521–486	Reign of Darius I
518	Persian armies enter India
516	Persian armies cross into Europe and reach the Danube
509–31	Roman Republic
508	Cleisthenes establishes the Athenian democracy
506	First victories of the new Athenian army
499–494	Ionian Revolt against Persia, Athens sends military aid
493	Latin League established
490	Battle of Marathon
486–465	Reign of Xerxes
480	Persian invasion of Greece; Battles of Thermopylae and Salamis
479	Battle of Platea

478	Delian League established; eventually transformed into an Athenian Empire
449	Peace of Callias officially ends the Persian Wars
431–427	Siege of Platea
431–421	Peloponnesian War, Part I
425	Pylos
422	Gabii first city to be granted full Roman citizenship
421	Peace of Nicias
416	Destruction of Melos
415–413	Athenian attack on Syracuse in Sicily
413–404	Peloponnesian War, Part II
412	Intervention of Persia in Peloponnesian War
411–410	Political division in Athens: oligarchy in Athens, democracy at Samos
411	Battles of Cynossema and Abydos
410	Battle of Cyzicus
406	Battles of Notium and Arginousae
406–396	Roman siege of Veii
405	Battle of Aegospotomae
404	Fall of Athens
404–371	Spartan hegemony
401	Battle of Cunaxa; <i>Anabasis</i> of the Ten Thousand
371	Battle of Leuctra
371–362	Theban hegemony
365–359	Reign of Perdiccas III
362	Battle of Mantinea; anarchy in Greece
359–336	Reign of Philip II
358	Battle of Lake Lychnitus
338	Battle of Chaeronea
336	Philip II assassinated
336–323	Reign of Alexander III

336–335	Alexander reconquers Philip's empire
336–330	Reign of Darius III
335	Destruction of Thebes
334	Alexander invades Persia; Battle of the Granicus River
333	Battle of Issus
331	Battle of Gaugamela, fall of the Persian Empire; capture of Babylon
330	Alexander occupies Persepolis; Alexander marches east; death of Darius III
326	Battle of the Hydaspes River
326–324	Alexander returns west to Babylon
323	Alexander dies at Babylon
323–276	Wars of the <i>Epigoni</i>
317	Battle of Paraitakene
316	Battle of Gabiene; death of Eumenes
315	Antigonos now most powerful of Alexander's successors
312–272	Reign of King Pyrrhus of Epirus
308–303	Seleucus campaigns in the east and India
306–304	All of Alexander's successors now assume the title of <i>basileus</i> (king)
301	Battle of Ipsos, death of Antigonos
280–275	Pyrrhic War
280	Battle of Hereclea
279	Battle of Asculum
276	Antigonos becomes King of Macedonia
275	Battle of Malventum (Beneventum)
264	Rome completes conquest of all Italy south of the Po
264–241	First Punic War
256	Roman invasion of Africa
255	Battle of Tunis ends in Roman flight from Africa
250	Parthian Empire established in the east
249	Battle of Drepana

241	Battle of the Aegates Islands
240–238	Mercenary/Truceless War
238	Rome seizes Corsica and Sardinia
237	Hamilcar Barca leads Carthaginian invasion of Spain
229–221	Hasdrubal commands Carthaginian forces in Spain
223–187	Reign of King Antiochus III of the Seleucid Empire
221–179	Reign of King Philip V of Macedonia
221	Hannibal takes control of Carthaginian forces in Spain
218	Hannibal besieges Saguntum Hannibal invades Italy; Battles of the Ticinius and Trebia Rivers
218–202	Second Punic War
217	Battle of Lake Trasimene
216	Battle of Cannae
215–205	First Macedonian War
210–206	P. Cornelius Scipio in Spain
204	Roman invasion of Africa
203	Hannibal leaves Italy
202	Battle of Zama
200–196	Second Macedonian War
197	Battle of Cynoscephalae
195	Hannibal arrives at the court of Antiochus III
192–189	Roman War with Antiochus
191	Second Battle of Thermopylae
190	Battle of Magnesia
183	Suicide of Hannibal
179–168	Reign of Perseus
172–168	Third Macedonian War
168	Battle of Pydna
149–146	Third Punic War
146	Destruction of Carthage and Corinth; Rome supreme in the Mediterranean

133	Tribunate of Ti. Sempronius Gracchus
133–31	Fall of the Roman Republic
112–105	Jugurthine War
107	First consulship of C. Marius
104–100	Second through sixth consulships of Marius
102	Marius defeats Teutones at Aqua Sextiae
101	Marius defeats Cimbri
91–89	Social War; all Italy south of the Po receives Roman citizenship
88	Consulship of L. Cornelius Sulla; Sulla marches on Rome
87	Marians capture Rome
86	Seventh consulship and death of Marius
83–82	Rome's First Civil War
82–79	Sulla's dictatorship
60	First Triumvirate established
59	Consulship of C. Julius Caesar
58	Caesar defeats Helvetii and the Germans
58–49	Caesar in Gaul
57	Caesar defeats Belgae at the Battle of the Sambre River
56	Naval battle in Quiberon Bay
55	Caesar crosses the Rhine; Caesar invades Britain
54	Caesar's second invasion of Britain
53	Crassus invades Parthia; Battle of Carrhae; Crassus captured and killed
52	Battle of Alesia
51	Siege of Uxellodunum
49–45	Second Civil War
49	Caesar crosses the Rubicon; Pompeius flees to Greece
48	Campaign of Dyrrachium and Battle of Pharsalus; Pompeius killed in Egypt; Caesar puts Cleopatra on the throne of Egypt
47	Birth of Ptolemy XV Caesarion; Caesar invades Anatolia; Battle of Zela

46	Caesar invades North Africa; Battle of Thapsus
45	Battle of Munda; Caesar returns to Rome and is made dictator
44	Caesar assassinated on Ides of March; rise of M. Antonius and C. Octavius
43	Formation of the Second Triumvirate
42	Battle of Philippi, suicides of Brutus and Cassius
32–31	Civil war
31	Battle of Actium; Rome conquers Egypt; end of the Roman Republic
31 B.C.E.–14 C.E.	Reign of Augustus
31 B.C.E.–476 C.E.	Roman Empire
68–69 C.E.	Year of the Four Emperors (civil war)
91	Defeat and division of the Huns in east Asia
98–117	Reign of the emperor Trajan
117	Greatest territorial extent of the Roman Empire
117–138	Reign of Hadrian
161–180	Reign of M. Aurelius, last of the “Five Good Emperors”
180–192	Reign of Commodus
193	Reigns of Pertinax and Didius Julius
193–211	Reign of Septimius Severus
193–235	Severan Dynasty
224	Sasanid Persian Empire established by Ardeshir I; end of Parthian Empire
235–270	Anarchy in the empire; constant civil war; frequent invasions
247	1000 year anniversary of the founding of Rome
251	Decius is first emperor killed in battle
253	First division of empire into east and west
260	Valerian is first emperor captured in battle
267–272	Reign of Queen Zenobia of Palmyra
270–275	Reign of Aurelian
275–282	Reign of Probus
282–283	Reign of Carus

283–284	Reign of Numerian
283–285	Reign of Carinus
284–305	Reign of Diocletian
306–323	New civil wars
306–337	Constantine I
313	Edict of Milan gives Christians religious freedom
323	Constantine defeats Licinius and becomes sole emperor
330	Constantinople officially dedicated
364–378	Reign of Valens
375–376	Huns defeat Goths; Visigoths seek refuge in Roman Empire
378	Battle of Adrianople
378–395	Reign of Theodosius I
391	Theodosius I proclaims Christianity official and only religion of the empire
395	Death of Theodosius I; Arcadius takes over in east, Honorius in west; Alaric becomes king of the Visigoths; Stilicho appointed regent for Honorius in west
406	Rhine River freezes, German tribes cross over; Britain abandoned by Rome
408	Stilicho executed
410	Rome sacked by Visigoths
419	Visigoths given independent kingdom in southern Gaul and northern Spain, other tribes follow
433–453	Attila leader of the Huns
451	Battle of the Catalaunian Fields, last great victory of western Roman army
455	Vandals sack Rome
475–476	Reign of Romulus Augustulus
476	Romulus Augustulus deposed by Odoacer; end of the Western Roman Empire
1453	Fall of Constantinople, end of Eastern Roman/Byzantine Empire



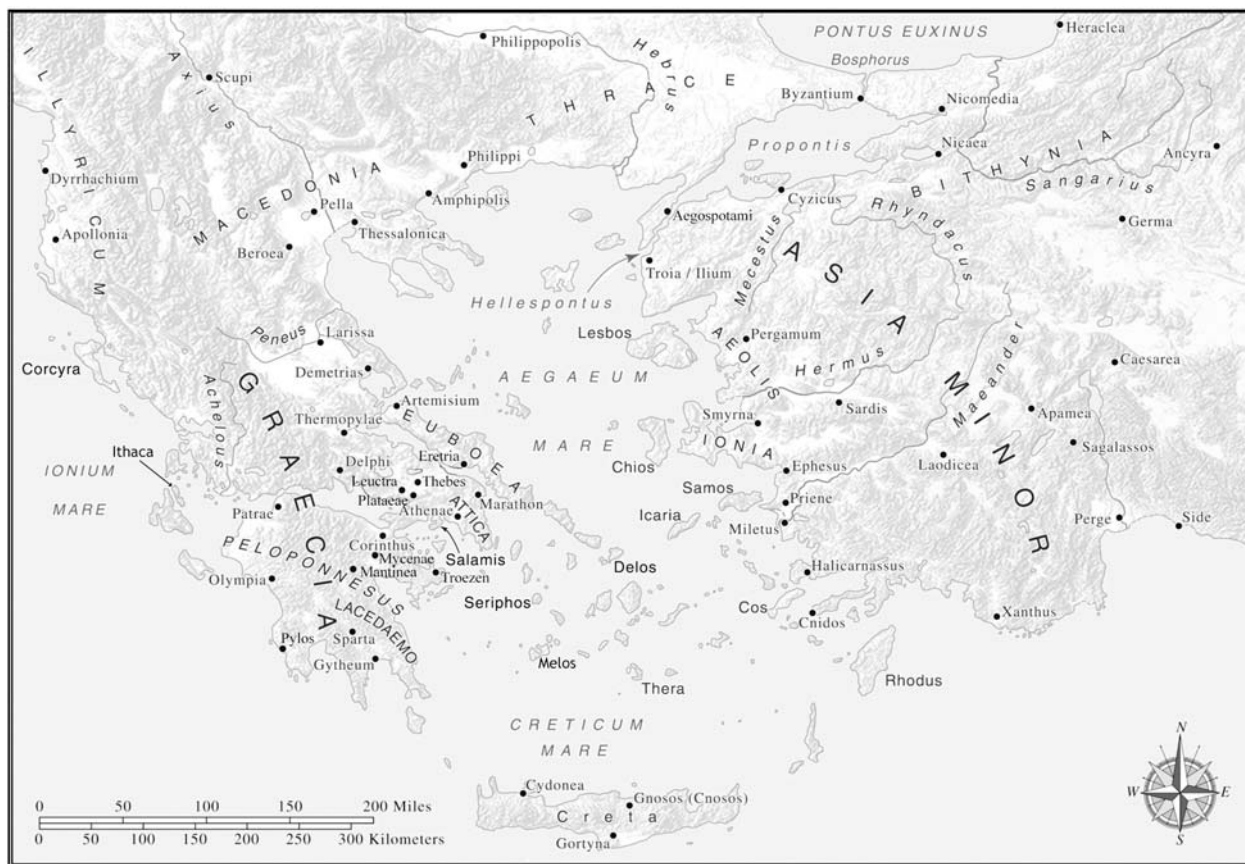
Ancient Italy. Map courtesy of Ancient World Mapping Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (www.unc.edu/awmc).



Ancient Mediterranean. Map courtesy of Ancient World Mapping Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (www.unc.edu/awmc).



Eastern Mediterranean. Map courtesy of Ancient World Mapping Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (www.unc.edu/awmc).



Greece and the Aegean. Map courtesy of Ancient World Mapping Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (www.unc.edu/awmc).

Introduction

War is the father of all things.—Heracleitus

Only the dead have seen the end of war.—Plato

Next to war, all other forms of human endeavor shrink to insignificance.—Patton

War is a constant part of the human experience, predating even civilization itself, and mastery of the military arts was a prerequisite for the survival of any society. Even the most advanced and seemingly permanent civilizations risked extinction if they failed to adapt to new military challenges. The great questions of history are often decided on the battlefield; military victory or defeat often dictates history's course. The survival and therefore the accomplishments of ancient peoples such as the Egyptians, Hittites, or Mycenaean Greeks were ultimately based on their military prowess; their failure to adapt to new technologies and new tactics led to their destruction. The success of the Persians in conquering and holding a vast empire was due largely to their superior army. The development of a unique military system in the Greek city-states, however, ensured that they were able to defend themselves against two Persian invasions. The preservation of Greek freedom meant not only the survival of democracy but also the development of the great Classical or Golden Age of cultural achievement. The Persian Empire would later fall when it proved incapable of dealing with the military threat posed by the invasion of the Macedonian king Alexander the Great. Ultimately, no army could compare to that of Rome, which would conquer and rule the Mediterranean for six centuries. Yet, at the end of antiquity, even the Roman army faltered; despite the reform efforts of Diocletian and other emperors, the army's inability to defend against the massive invasions of German tribes led to the fall of the western empire, the almost total disappearance of Roman civilization, and the beginning of a new Dark Age.

To understand ancient history, it is necessary to understand the role of warfare in antiquity. Therefore, the purpose of this book is to provide an introduction to the study of warfare in the ancient world, from the first clash

of bronze weapons on bronze armor down through the fall of the Roman Empire.

To achieve its goal, this book addresses a number of important questions. For example, how did various civilizations organize their militaries? How did governments or rulers control their armies to ensure they would not be a source of internal rebellion and violence? How did the type of government (absolute monarchy, heroic monarchy, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, or democracy) affect the type of army a state sent into battle? How did various governments wage war, and what were the overall strategies they employed? Who were the generals and officers who made the decisions for these armies in the field? Who served in the various armies (slaves, subjects, mercenaries, or citizens), and why? What type of weapons, armor, and other equipment did soldiers use? What types of units (infantry, cavalry, light infantry, elephant corps) were found in these armies? And, how were new tactics or technologies developed and implemented that might give these armies an advantage?

Specific wars and specific battles, on both land and sea, are discussed in some detail to demonstrate how the various armies actually functioned in combat. The discussion analyzes how armies made it to the battlefield, the various formations in which they were drawn up, and the tactical orders they received. It then follows the battle as it unfolds, focusing on the role of the general and officers in directing the battle, the interaction of the various units on the field, their ability or inability to carry out specific orders and maneuvers, and, ultimately, the factors that led to victory or defeat. The discussion also attempts to recreate the actual nature of war, the “face” of ancient battle, to understand the experience of a regular soldier fighting in the ranks. As noted, history was often riding on the outcome of these encounters, so their significance is discussed, as well.

The format of the work is chronological, organized around 12 chapters that trace the military history of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Mediterranean. Since battles did not occur in a vacuum, some historical narrative is necessary to provide the background and context for these armies and these events. The chronological structure allows us to trace certain general themes down through the centuries, especially the evolution of ancient warfare as armies and empires become steadily larger and more sophisticated. These changes cover almost every conceivable aspect of war, including technological and tactical innovations, as well as advances involving military organization, command, and even encampment. Since these developments often helped to decide the course of a battle and sometimes the course of history, they are analyzed in depth. Eventually, history comes full circle. With Rome’s fall, a new, dark period is inaugurated in which armies are again small and unsophisticated in terms of organization, technology, and tactics.

The book includes numerous important features. For instance, each chapter contains digressions on important topics concerning military history. Examples include discussions on chariot warfare, cavalry, naval war in antiquity, the rules by which naval campaigns were conducted, the role of

light infantry in combat, war crimes, elephants in battle, and the overriding concern of all ancient commanders: finding sufficient food and water for their men. Eyewitness accounts of ancient warfare are incorporated whenever possible. These begin with Ahmose, son of Baba, an Egyptian soldier circa 1551 B.C.E., who described his efforts to help liberate Egypt from foreign oppressors. Other eyewitnesses include Tyrtaeus, who fought in the Spartan army around 650 B.C.E.; Thucydides, an Athenian general who wrote a history of the disastrous Peloponnesian War; Xenophon, another Athenian soldier who not only witnessed the end of the Peloponnesian War but also participated in one of the great military adventures of ancient history, the *Anabasis*; C. Julius Caesar, who wrote extensive commentaries on his campaigns during the Gallic and Civil Wars, the only such works by a Roman general to survive; a low-ranking officer in Caesar's army who provides an eyewitness account of Caesar's campaign in Africa; a *miles* (the lowest ranking soldier in the Roman army), who wrote an account of Caesar's war in Spain, the only such description to survive from antiquity from the point of view of an average soldier; and a letter from Ser. Sulpicius Galba, a Roman *legate* (officer), written the day after a civil war battle, literally the only example of a "dispatch" from the front. Also included are various illustrations to complement the text and provide a helpful visual impact. These embrace diagrams of campaigns, battles, armies, and navies to help explain battle strategies and tactics; portraits of some of history's influential military leaders (such as the mosaic of Alexander the Great from Pompeii, which graces the cover of this book); and pictures of archeological artifacts and battle sites. Maps are essential for understanding military history and are spread liberally throughout the work. An extensive timeline is provided to make available all relevant dates from the text and to provide "stepping stone" dates from one period or one event to another that are not discussed in the text but will, we hope, help the reader follow along without having to search other books or the Internet for the relevant information. Last but not least, this book provides a bibliography listing easily attainable sources to allow the reader to pursue further study. These include ancient sources such as Herodotus, Thucydides, and Caesar; the latest in current scholarship and debate; and even documentaries and Hollywood movies that deal with these topics.

It is now 20 years since I first began to teach the various subjects discussed in this book, and, indeed, much of this work is the product of lectures, discussions with students and colleagues, and intense research. Quite simply, this book attempts to tell a good story, while ensuring that the story is grounded in the principles of sound and current scholarship. I hope that it provides a handy, single-volume introductory work that is easily accessible to the educated reader and that it inspires the reader to delve further into the ancient past. This is, in fact, the book I wished existed when I first became interested in these topics so many years ago.

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One

War in the Bronze Age

THE CHARIOT REVOLUTION

The early periods of Egyptian history (Dynastic, Old and Middle Kingdoms) were characterized by peace, prosperity, and pyramids.¹ The Mediterranean to the north, the desert to east and west, and the jungles and cataracts to the south provided Egypt with natural protection from the outside world. From the emergence of Egyptian civilization in 3100 B.C.E. to the end of the Middle Kingdom, around 1652, Egypt not only enjoyed (mostly) internal peace and stability but also suffered no invasions. This period of security from outside attack is almost unprecedented in human history; possibly only the Japanese, who were safe from the time of the first emperor Jimmu in 660 B.C.E. until World War II, can boast a greater such period. It is no wonder that Egyptians believed themselves to be blessed by their gods.

Unfortunately, in history, all good things must come to an end. In 1652, for the first time in 1,500 years, an invader attacked and conquered Egypt. According to an Egyptian chronicler, "For what cause I do not know a blast of the gods smote us unexpectedly from the east. Asiatic invaders marched against our land. Their race was called HYKSOS."²

The Hyksos ("Shepard-Kings") were a Semetic-speaking people who came from Palestine to the northeast. Like most pastoralist peoples in history, they had no permanent homes, nor did they practice agriculture. Instead, almost everything they needed they took from their animals: milk, food, clothing, the tents they lived in, even the alcohol they drank. They were constantly on the move from one place to another, searching for land on which their animals could graze. Pastoralists had little in the way of art, nor were they literate. However, these peoples usually excelled at war and in military technology.

The Hyksos were no exception, possessing a number of military advantages over the seemingly more civilized Egyptians. The Hyksos brought with them the composite bow made of wood and horn layered together through lamination and bound with sinew that gave it a huge advantage in distance, power, and accuracy. They wore bronze body armor (the Egyptians had no

armor at all), and they had developed a much lighter shield, which left them less encumbered than their Egyptian foes, whose shields weighed them down. Last, the Hyksos introduced into Egypt the most significant military weapon of the Bronze Age: the chariot. Chariots had been around for centuries, but it was not until the 1600s B.C.E. that they became important militarily due to numerous innovations and improvements. The new chariot was made of light wood, with a leather platform to carry two men. It was pulled by two horses wearing new harnesses that allowed them to pull heavier loads faster without the risk of choking. New spoked wheels, rather than the old solid wheels, were also vital to the chariot's development; they were far lighter and sturdier. These chariots were therefore more durable and, weighing only about 60 pounds, could now travel much faster, about 10 miles per hour. One of the men in the chariot was the driver; the other man, who was tied to the chariot to keep his hands free, did the fighting. He was equipped with the composite bow, and the chariot carried a quiver with maybe as many as 80 arrows. Chariot armies had a huge advantage over infantry forces, using their superior speed and mobility to move quickly around the battlefield, firing their arrows at stationary targets while moving fast enough to avoid the incoming missiles of their enemies. Foot soldiers still participated in battles, especially on lands unsuitable for chariots or in defending or besieging cities or camps. They also served as support troops for the chariot teams both in and out of battle. However, it was the chariots that decided the major battles of the period.

Typically, chariot armies would spread out in long lines across a suitably flat and wide battlefield. There was significant space between each chariot in front, in back, and on the flanks to provide plenty of room to maneuver. When the two armies engaged, chariot teams did not simply crash into each other, as horses avoid an actual, physical collision if at all possible. Instead, the chariot teams would move toward an enemy force and in many cases pass completely through the numerous gaps in the opposing line, or, if this avenue was not available, they might turn back or move along the front of an enemy formation. If one side did not break after the first charge, a second charge, this time from the opposite direction, might be necessary. At some point, when one army had suffered significant casualties and panic began to spread among its ranks, some chariot teams would lose heart and begin to retreat either in an orderly fashion or in headlong flight, seeking a secure refuge. The chariot force that remained together on the field could then claim the victory.

In 1652, the introduction of these new weapons hit Egypt like a thunderbolt as the Hyksos conquered all of Lower Egypt (the Nile Delta bordering the Mediterranean) and Upper Egypt (the region further south along the Nile) as far as Abydos. The Hyksos established their capital at Avaris (Tanis), in the Nile Delta. Their rule was known as the Second Intermediate Period, and their kings constituted Egypt's Dynasties XV and XVI. At the same time, the Hyksos were establishing their rule in the north; the kingdom of Kush (Nubia), to the south, took advantage of Egyptian weakness and regained its

independence. Kush also took control of much of the upper reaches of the Nile, ruling as far north as Elephantine and the First Cataract.

This period marked the nadir of Bronze Age Egypt. Only a small part of the Nile remained free, as Egyptians controlled only the first eight *nomes* (administrative districts) of Upper Egypt from Abydos to Elephantine, with a capital at Karnack (Thebes). This part of free Egypt was ruled by Dynasty XVII, established by Rahotep. Rahotep and his successors kept the traditions of the Old and Middle Kingdoms alive in education, in religion, and even in the building of pyramids. However, the wealth and power of Dynasty XVII pharaohs were greatly diminished; their pyramids were made of mud.

Egyptian humiliation would last for nearly a century, until the pharaoh Sekenre Ta'a II, "The Brave" (d. 1570), decided he could no longer endure the national humiliation of foreign occupation of north and south: "I should like to know why I, an Egyptian pharaoh, sit united with an Asiatic and a Nubian?"³

He rebelled, breaking the uneasy peace that had existed in Egypt since the days of the conquest. The revolt began with an attack on the Hyksos and their king, Apophis I. Unfortunately, Sekenre Ta'a was killed in battle. His tomb and mummy have been found; his face, neck, and head were crushed by a Hyksos battle-axe. His cause was carried on by his two sons, first by Kamose (r. 1570–1567). He was inspired not only by patriotism but also by the personal desire to avenge his father. Kamose reorganized the Egyptian army; specifically, he adopted Hyksos technology: bronze body armor, the lightweight shield, the composite bow, and, most notably, the chariot. After this reorganization, Kamose was able to dramatically expand the territory held by the Egyptians north to the Nile Delta and south to Buhen.

In 1567, Kamose, like his father before him, was killed in battle, and the task of liberating Egypt fell to his younger brother, Ahmose I (r. 1567–1542). He was only 10 years old when he ascended the throne, so it was not until 1557 that he attacked. His first target was the Hyksos, and, using his brother's new army, he recaptured Memphis (Egypt's ancient capital), Avaris (the Hyksos capital), and, last, Sharuhén, the final city in Egypt still occupied by the Hyksos. The Hyksos were driven out, and their last king, Apophis III, was killed. After defeating the Hyksos, Ahmose moved south to attack Kush. He was successful there, as well, driving the Nubians from Buhen to the Third Cataract.

For both wars, we have a remarkable eyewitness account: a soldier from Ahmose's army inscribed his battle experiences on his tomb. His name was also Ahmose, the son of Ibana (his mother) and Baba (his father). He wrote:

I was taken by boat, the *Northern*, because I was brave and I accompanied the pharaoh, life and health be upon him, into battle and fought bravely in the pharaoh's presence. Avaris was sacked and I was rewarded with gold and four slaves, one man and three women. After his majesty had slain the Asiatics, he sailed south to destroy the Nubian bowmen. The Nubian king met his doom, the gods of Egypt took him, and the pharaoh carried him off into captivity. His majesty made a great slaughter amongst the Nubians and I came away with gold, four slaves, and three hands [the

cutting off and taking of hands of enemies killed in battle was a sign of bravery in battle and proof of the enemies a soldier had killed]. Pharaoh returned to Karnak, his heart rejoicing in valor and victory. He had conquered both the Northerners and the Southerners.⁴

By 1551, Ahmose had liberated Egypt after more than a century of foreign rule and national humiliation. Ahmose I was the first king of Dynasty XVIII (1551–1295), and his victories inaugurated the New Kingdom, which would mark the final, dazzling epoch of ancient Egyptian civilization.

WARRIOR PHARAOHS AND THE EGYPTIAN EMPIRE, 1551–1213

The new unified Egypt established by Ahmose I was a true nation-state, unified in language, culture, and religion and tied to together by the Nile River. The country was blessed by the gods and prospered accordingly. The reintroduction of peace and unity once again made Egypt the richest state in the eastern Mediterranean. However, New Kingdom Egypt was in many ways different from the Egypt of the Old and Middle Periods. The Hyksos invasion and occupation had a dramatic impact on almost every aspect of Egyptian society. The biggest change was the Egyptians' mortal fear of another invasion and occupation. This experience had so scarred the Egyptians that they decided they must do everything possible to prevent and defend against similar attacks in the future.

In previous periods, the Egyptians had only a small militia without professional soldiers or officers. In general, military service and the army were looked down on by Egyptian society. Now, for the first time in history, the Egyptians created a professional standing army. The leader of this new army would be a new type of king: the warrior-pharaoh. Egyptian art, in a sharp break from past practices, now depicted the king as a military leader riding in his chariot, firing arrows, wielding a sword, and holding by the hair enemies who would be either executed or enslaved. Inspired by the pharaoh's example, the people of Egypt now looked on the army as a source of strength, unity, and national pride, the only instrument that protected the Nile Valley against further attacks. Military service was now a noble profession and a sacred duty for the defense of Egypt.

The Egyptians created an army of 20,000 permanent professional soldiers. These men were divided into four divisions, each named after an Egyptian god: Amon, Ptah, Ra, and Seth. The names of the units demonstrate that warfare was part of a holy crusade to expand and defend the power of Egypt with the full support of the gods. The army was equipped with the latest technology, much of which had been learned from the Hyksos. Bronze body armor, longer swords, and lighter shields all become standard. The Egyptians also created a chariot squadron numbering more than 3,000 vehicles; this was the core of the army's power. These units could also be augmented by further temporary conscription in time of emergency.

This new army would not be used merely to defend Egypt against attack. A conscious decision was made to alter more than a thousand years of Egyptian foreign policy. The Egyptians decided they must create an empire to establish buffer zones between the Nile Valley and its enemies. The more territory the Egyptians conquered the further potential invaders would be from the Nile. Despite incredible power and wealth dating back to its founding in 3100 B.C.E., Egypt had rarely ventured abroad. Now, for the first time, Egypt would attempt to conquer an empire.

THE FIRST GREAT BATTLE OF THE BRONZE AGE: MEGIDDO, 1457

It was during the 1400s that Egypt's empire reached its greatest extent. This success was due in large part to one of Egypt's greatest pharaohs, Thutmose III (r. 1458–1425), the great-grandson of Ahmose I and the sixth ruler of Dynasty XVIII. On Egypt's borders, there were three regions into which Egyptian armies expanded to create the necessary buffer zones of protection. In the south was the Kingdom of Kush, which, along with the Hyksos, had occupied parts of Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period. To the west was Libya. To the northeast were the independent city-states of Palestine and Syria; this was also the region from which the Hyksos invaded. Further north, beyond these city-states, were two of the other great powers of the period: the Hittite Empire in Anatolia (modern Turkey), and the Kingdom of the Mitanni, in northern Mesopotamia. Thutmose III would spend most of his 33-year reign campaigning against these various enemies.

His first campaigns took him northeast against the various independent city-states of Palestine and Syria. He fought these campaigns in two stages, from 1457 to 1455 and again from 1450 to 1447. In the first stage, Thutmose III faced a coalition of 330 city-states that joined together to thwart the Egyptians' efforts at conquest. They were led by the king of Qadesh and backed by the kingdom of the Mitanni, which also wanted to move into this region and keep the Egyptians out. In 1457, Thutmose III fought the Battle of Megiddo (in modern Israel) against his enemies; this is the first battle in history for which details have survived.

As a good warrior-pharaoh, Thutmose III led his army in person. He moved northeast out of Egypt along the Mediterranean coast toward his enemies, who had gathered at Megiddo. Thutmose III had three possible routes through the mountains to Megiddo. The first two went around the mountains to the west and to the east, respectively. These two roundabout routes were safer but longer and far more time-consuming. The third possibility was the direct route through the Aruna Defile. This road was quicker, but it was also more dangerous: if the enemy held the pass in strength, the Egyptian army would be walking into a trap. The Egyptian generals advised their pharaoh to take one of the safer routes to prevent a sneak attack; Thutmose III demurred. He was the pharaoh and as such must show no fear by taking bold action. He therefore led his men through the defile, arriving at Megiddo far earlier than expected and taking his enemy by surprise before

it was able to gather together its entire army. Thutmosis III then divided his troops into three strike forces. The first unit, on the left wing, moved northwest of Megiddo to cut off his enemy's potential escape route to Syria. The second unit, on the right wing, moved southeast of the city to prevent further enemy forces from joining up with those already at Megiddo. Thutmosis III led the third unit in the center. This division consisted of 1,000 chariots, as well as support troops. Thutmosis III himself was leading in his own chariot made of gold and silver and wearing the *kheprash*, the pharaoh's blue war crown. First, his troops loosed a hail of arrows, followed by a charge by Thutmosis and his chariot squadron against a surprised and disorganized enemy. Last, his infantry support troops followed up the main chariot force to finish off the stunned enemy with axes, spears, and swords. The enemy line broke under this pressure, attempting to escape into Megiddo. The gates of the city were closed, but the inhabitants dropped down ropes to pull their soldiers to safety, and even the kings of Qadesh and Megiddo were forced to flee in this humiliating fashion. The enemy had left the battlefield so quickly that it had abandoned nearly a thousand chariots, which were captured by Thutmosis as trophies to his victory. Thutmosis then lay Megiddo under siege; after seven months, the city capitulated. Egypt's enemies were enslaved or executed, their territories plundered. The survivors were subjugated to Egypt; they were forced to take an oath of loyalty to Thutmosis III and were obliged to send tribute and hostages to the pharaoh. These hostages were usually the children of various kings, who were indoctrinated and overawed by Egyptian power and wealth. At the same time, their fathers did not dare rebel and risk their lives.

Ultimately, like all empires in history, the Egyptian Empire was held together by fear and the threat of force. To reinforce Egyptian control, further campaigns were launched from 1450 to 1447. During these campaigns, Thutmosis inspected his holdings, crushed dissenters, and generally showed the flag and the power of Egypt. Egypt now controlled land as far as the Orontes River (in Syria).

In 1446, for the first and only time in Egyptian history, an Egyptian pharaoh crossed into Mesopotamia. Thutmosis III moved over the Euphrates on bridges constructed with boats and defeated the kingdom of the Mitanni as revenge for Mitanni's intervention in Palestine. He set up a trophy to commemorate his victory on the far side of the river and went on an elephant hunt to demonstrate his power and the inability of Mitanni to hinder his movements. He imposed tribute on and took hostages from Mitanni, as well.

Thutmosis also campaigned in the south. In 1429, he drove the kingdom of Kush back beyond the Fourth Cataract, the furthest south any Egyptian army had ever ventured.

The power of Thutmosis III extended beyond territories he had invaded and conquered. He received tribute from the Kassites in Babylonia, the Assyrians in northern Mesopotamia, and possibly even from the Mycenaeans in Greece, on the northwestern frontiers of the civilized world. By the time of his death in 1425, Thutmosis III was the most powerful pharaoh in Egypt

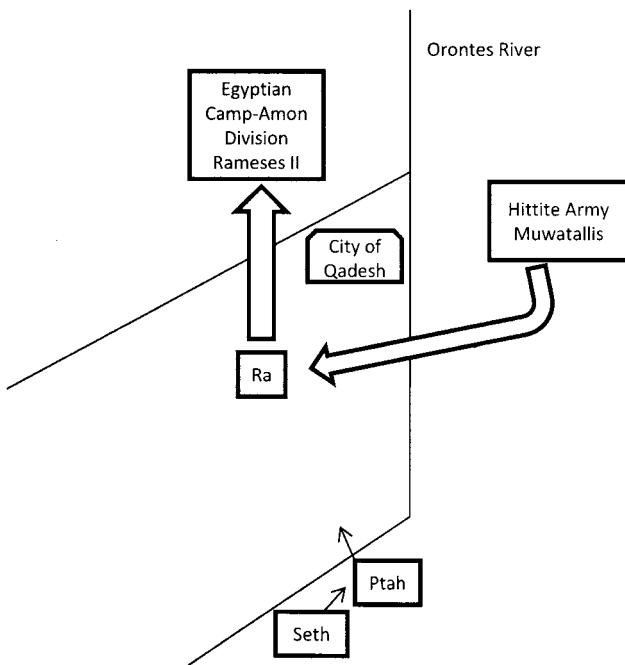
history and the most powerful ruler in world history until this time. The Egyptian Empire was the biggest the world had yet seen.

THE CLASH OF BRONZE AGE SUPERPOWERS: QADESH, 1274

Egypt's fortunes peaked again during the thirteenth century, in the reign of another great pharaoh Rameses II (r. 1279–1213), the third king of Dynasty XIX (1295–1188). Rameses dominated the century, ruling for 66 years, longer than any other Egyptian king. He built more temples, more monuments, and more palaces than any other ruler and had more than 100 children. His main goal was to restore the Egyptian Empire of Thutmosis III and, with it, the power and glory not just of Egypt but, more important, of the pharaoh. He wanted to reestablish the buffer zones that protected Egypt from the outside world and restore the flow of tribute that made Egypt rich and financed his building projects and his army.

Beginning in 1279, Rameses campaigned in the northeast, restoring control of numerous cities and reaching Tyre and Byblos by 1275 (see Figure 1.1). These incursions immediately brought Egypt into conflict with the Hittite Empire, based in Anatolia (modern Turkey). Rameses' campaigns represented a direct threat to the newly established Hittite hegemony in the region. Inevitably, war broke out between the Bronze Age superpowers.

Figure 1.1
Battle of Qadesh, 1274



In 1274, the Egyptians and the Hittites fought the Battle of Qadesh, the only battle besides Megiddo for which significant information survives from the Bronze Age. The information derives from more than a dozen inscriptions set up by Rameses, most notably at the great temple at Karnak, as well as written accounts found on papyrus. Luckily, one Akkadian record also survives to provide some balance. Rameses led out the entire Egyptian army, including all four divisions of infantry, numbering some 20,000 soldiers, as well as the entire complement of chariots, numbering 3,000 vehicles. The Hittite forces were led by King Muwatallis II (r. 1293–1271) and numbered possibly as many as 37,000 foot soldiers. Muwatallis had 2,500 Hittite chariot teams and 1,000 more from allied and vassal states. The Hittite chariots carried three men and were therefore larger, stronger, and more potent in attack, though slower than the Egyptian vehicles. As far as we know, there were more men on the battlefield at Qadesh than at any other battle in history until that time; similar numbers would not be seen again until centuries later. Qadesh also represented the biggest chariot battle in the history of the world.

Rameses moved northeast from Avaris out of Egypt through Canaan, Galilee, and the Beqa'a Valley toward Qadesh. His army moved quickly, covering more than 500 miles in 30 days. It arrived at the Wood of Lana on the south bank of the Orontes River, just south of the city of Qadesh, which was a key vassal of the Hittites. The Hittite army had already arrived and was now hiding in a valley just east of the city. Rameses was unaware of the proximity of his enemy, and he was further lulled to sleep by a clever ruse of Muwatallis. The Hittite king sent two spies posing as deserters to Rameses; they informed the pharaoh that the Hittite army was not nearby but was instead far to the north at Aleppo. On the basis of this information, Rameses decided to cross the Orontes at the ford of Shabtuna and to move north to make his camp just west of Qadesh. Because he somewhat foolishly accepted the tale told by Muwatallis's spies, he did not take the normal precautions during this march; he did not send out scouts, and his army was not marching in battle order.

Rameses took the lead with the *Amon* division while the *Ra*, *Ptah*, and *Seth* divisions straggled along behind. Rameses and the *Amon* arrived west of Qadesh and began to build a camp while waiting for the rest of the soldiers. The Egyptian army was strung out along the road, disunified and unprepared for battle; it was the moment Muwatallis was waiting for. The Hittite army suddenly appeared, moving south and then west around the city of Qadesh. Rameses described the scene:

the vile foe from Hatti [the Hittite Empire] had come and brought together all the foreign lands as far as the ends of the sea. The entire land of Hatti had come, that of Naharin also, that of Arzawa and Dardany [possibly the Trojans who may have been subjects of the Hittites at this time], that of Keshkesh, those of Masa, those of Pidasa, that of Irun, that of Karkisha, that of Luka, Kizzuwadna, Carchemish, Ugarit, Kedy, the entire land of Nuges, Mushanet and Qadesh [city-states in Syria and vassals of the Hittites]. . . . They covered the mountains and valleys and were like locusts in their multitude.⁵

Then the 2,500 Hittite chariots spearheading the attack crossed the Orontes and crashed into the *Ra* division (which was second in the Egyptian order of march) before the third and fourth divisions, the *Ptah* and the *Seth*, had been able to get across the river. The *Ra* was driven in disorder from the field, and the Hittites then wheeled north to attack the *Amon* division and Rameses in camp. When news of the sudden attack and flight of the *Ra* reached the camp, the *Amon* division panicked, as well, and, according to Rameses, abandoned their pharaoh. Rameses tells us he was undaunted: he seized his weapons, donned his armor, and leapt onto his chariot. However, he was still alone, surrounded by 2,500 enemy chariots. Like so many soldiers down through the ages in similar, life-threatening circumstances, Rameses sought divine aid:

I call to you father Amon [the chief Egyptian god], I am among a host of enemies, all countries are arrayed against me, I am alone, there is no one with me. My numerous troops have deserted me, not one of my charioteers looks for me, I keep on shouting for them but none heed my call.

Amon heeded Rameses' prayer and appeared to help turn the tide of battle:

Amon came when I called him, he gave me his hand and I rejoiced. He called . . . "Forward, I am with you, I, your father. . . . I will prevail over a hundred thousand men, for I am Lord of Victory."⁶

Heartened by the presence of his god, Rameses, alone, charged 2,500 enemy chariots, not once but six times. Seeing their pharaoh fighting alone, his men overcame their fears and rejoined the battle.

We will never know the truth of Rameses' claims, but the Egyptians managed to survive and regroup for two reasons. First, reinforcements finally arrived from the south in the form of the *Ptah* and *Seth* divisions and from the north in the form of Canaanite mercenaries. Second, many of the Hittite charioteers, believing the battle had been won, stopped fighting and began to plunder the Egyptian camp. They were slaughtered by the Canaanite mercenaries. Muwatallis attempted to regain the momentum of the battle by unleashing his 1,000 chariots held in reserve but was unable to crush the Egyptian army.

Rameses described the battle as a great Egyptian victory; what really happened is that his blunders nearly led to disaster. He was able to rescue his army but quickly retreated to the south, an unlikely move for a supposedly victorious general. Muwatallis moved to reimpose Hittite control over Syria, limiting Egyptian influence to regions further south. In 1261, the Hittites and the Egyptians agreed to the first known peace treaty in history. The treaty established a boundary between the two empires; the Hittites would keep northern Syria, the Egyptians southern Syria and Palestine. This treaty apparently remained in effect until the ultimate fall of the Hittite Empire, more than 150 years later. The Hittites and the Egyptians did not engage in any further conflicts through the rest of the Bronze Age. To cement the alliance, Rameses

even married two Hittite princesses, one in 1246, the second in 1235, and the Hittite king Hattusilis III visited Egypt in 1239. Though the Egyptian Empire would not again reach the extent it had during the reign of Thutmosis III, Rameses had succeeded in establishing a long-lasting peace on Egypt's north-eastern frontier.

Rameses and Egypt also expanded to the west and to the south. In the west, Rameses drove back the Libyans and established garrisons along the Mediterranean coast past El Alamein. This allowed the Egyptians to control the lucrative trade along this road while at the same time protecting against Libyan incursions. In the south, Rameses pushed the Kingdom of Kush beyond the Fifth Cataract. On this southern border, Rameses built his most famous monument, four colossal images of himself, each 67 feet high, facing south toward Kush to act as a warning to any potential enemies by demonstrating the might and wealth of Egypt's pharaoh and by acting in effect as a huge sign ordering Egypt's neighbors to stay out and continue to pay tribute.

THE DEMISE OF THE CHARIOT AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE BRONZE AGE WORLD, 1200–1100

At the beginning of the twelfth century B.C.E., there were six major centers of civilization in the eastern Mediterranean world and Middle East: Mesopotamia, the Near East (Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine), Egypt (the Nile Valley), Kush or Nubia to the south of Egypt, the Hittite Empire, and Mycenaean Greece. Generally, these regions had been at the forefront of civilization at least since the beginning of the Bronze Age, in 2000 B.C.E., and some regions, like the Nile, had been civilized far longer. However, during the 1100s, one of the greatest catastrophes in history occurred as, quite suddenly and quite dramatically, four of these civilizations (Egypt, Mycenaean Greece, the Hittite Empire, and the Near East) were attacked and almost every city in the Eastern Mediterranean, 47 in all, was destroyed. Egypt survived but would never truly recover and shortly thereafter would be swallowed up by a succession of foreign powers. Only Mesopotamia and Kush emerged unscathed. The main cause was war, specifically sustained invasions by pastoralist peoples. These tribes came from beyond the civilized world, meaning they migrated great distances from the north or lived in nearby mountains, deserts, and marginal lands in proximity to more civilized regions. Throughout the Bronze Age, they consistently caused problems; the Hyksos invasion and occupation of Egypt is a prime example. In general, despite these constant pressures from tribal peoples, civilizations usually had certain advantages that allowed them to weather these attacks and keep their enemies at bay. These peoples were more numerous, allowing for much larger armies. They were better organized, possessed of elaborate political and military bureaucracies that allowed them to put well-equipped armies into the field. They also had the technological ability to build elaborate fortifications to protect cities and garrisons. Maybe most important during the middle to late Bronze Age, these civilizations

had the chariot, the most important weapon of the period. Chariot teams were extremely expensive to build and maintain. The Egyptians and Hittites could put thousands of chariots into the field, overwhelming smaller pastoralist armies; the advantage enjoyed by the Hyksos in 1652 was no longer operative. In the plains around these civilized regions, pastoralist armies were unable to defeat these chariot forces, meaning that even if they were able to win military victories in more difficult terrain far from the heartland, the ultimate survival of these civilizations was not in doubt.

During the last century of the Bronze Age, things suddenly changed. A new style of warfare evolved that employed new and improved military technology, along with new ideas on military tactics. During the late Bronze Age, these tribes developed better and lighter body armor and grieves. Lighter and smaller round shields were also introduced. Revolutionary longer, stronger swords were forged. These were the first slashing and thrusting swords, usually more than 30 inches long, with a long skinny blade and a hilt of bone or wood securely attached with rivets to survive any shock. They also invented a new weapon, the javelin, which could be used as a missile to hurl at an enemy. It usually measured between three and four feet long and weighed a little less than a pound. They then combined the new and improved armor and weapons with new tactics designed to overcome the civilizations' chariot advantage. Utilizing the lighter body armor and lighter shields and grieves, these warriors could now move very quickly on the battlefield, presenting a moving target to chariot archers, and their armor would allow them some protection even if an enemy shot was on target. Armies would unleash a hail of javelins at enemy chariot squadrons to kill or disable both men and horses. Javelins could be used while moving at great speeds and did not require that a warrior stop, kneel, and aim. The armies would then move quickly to close on the incapacitated chariot teams. They would use their new longer swords, which provided them with greater reach, and they would attack the chariot driver and passenger, who were usually not wearing armor and who usually carried only a bow, which was not effective for fighting in close quarters. For the first time in centuries, these warriors had negated the greatest military advantage enjoyed by the various civilizations. The "news" somehow spread all around the periphery of the ancient world to other tribes, which now seized this opportunity to attack their civilized neighbors. Various tribes would sometimes even join together for these campaigns, and, once these tribes mastered sea travel, no shore was too far for an attack. The failure of the chariot in the face of this new warfare marks the beginning of the Bronze Age world's collapse.

The invasions that destroyed much of the Bronze Age world began in the northwest and from there swept south and east to eventually engulf the entire eastern Mediterranean region. Concomitant attacks would later originate from other border regions, including the mountains of northern and southern Anatolia and the deserts of Palestine and North Africa.

The Mycenaean Greeks apparently expected some sort of attack and may have known the identity of the attackers, though unfortunately they do not bother to reveal it to us. The Mycenaeans did make frantic defensive

preparations for an expected attack. Many cities strengthened their walls at this time; others took elaborate methods to secure their water supply in the event of a siege. Fortresses were built along the coasts to watch for seaborne attackers. There was even an apparent attempt to build a wall across the Isthmus of Corinth, the narrow neck of land separating central Greece from the Peloponnesus (southern Greece). This project was never completed.

In the end, all of these efforts were in vain; almost every single Mycenaean city was destroyed. The invaders apparently began in central Greece, destroying Iolkos, Thebes, Gla, and Orchomenus, among others, before eventually moving south and sacking Tiryns and the other great cities of the Peloponnesus. Mycenae was attacked by land around 1200. An army appeared in the flat, wide open plain south of Mycenae. The Mycenaean military was called out, and the chariot squadrons were sent into action. Using the new and improved technology and new tactics, the invaders were able to quickly overcome the Mycenaean chariots. The Mycenaean army was chased from the field, and the invaders were free to attack and plunder the countryside and urban centers. People sought shelter in the citadel of Mycenae, but to no avail; it was captured and burned. Most of the inhabitants were either killed or fled. The plain around Mycenae was no longer safe and was abandoned. Some people did survive and returned to the citadel to continue Mycenaean civilization, but on a much reduced scale. The art, pottery, and architecture were still Mycenaean but were made of poor materials, and the workmanship was shoddy. Linear B, the Mycenaean system of writing, disappeared. The city itself was now crowded with refugees, huddled in shantytowns of makeshift dwellings. Some buildings were rebuilt, but they were no longer built to the old Mycenaean standards. The most important government buildings and royal residences, such as the famous House of Columns, were still occupied, so it is possible the *wanax* (king) survived, as well. However, his power had declined dramatically. He no longer had an elaborate bureaucracy to help run his government, and he lost control over what had once been the various provinces of his kingdom. No longer was there a huge gap between leaders and the led in terms of wealth. The economic health of the city plummeted as trade with the rest of Greece and the outside world was cut off. Mycenae survived in this much reduced state for maybe 80 years but was never able to truly recover from the initial shocks of the first attack. Finally, sometime around 1120, invaders appeared again. Whether these were the same tribes or new ones is unknown, but the attack in 1120 was fatal. The city was destroyed and the entire population, some 200,000 people, was gone, either killed or fled.

Other cities did not endure the long, slow demise of Mycenae; instead, the end came quickly. One example is the city of Pylos, the mythical home of King Nestor, on the southwestern Greek coast. From Pylos there comes an amazing source of information concerning the fall of the city: detailed wax tablets chronicling the last days of the city have survived, baked in the fires that would ultimately destroy the city. According to the tablets, the *wanax* of

Pylos knew an invader was coming, though again he does not bother to tell us who it was. He too is making frantic preparations for the defense of his city. It seems clear that the *wanax* is expecting an attack by sea. The entries end with an eerie line that the soldiers were now watching the coast. Altogether, the *wanax* of Pylos mobilized 1,500 men, nearly his entire army. And, in this desperate hour, the *wanax* resorted to human sacrifice, something almost unheard of in Greek religion. This may have been the last act of the *wanax* of Pylos. All of these efforts, including the appeal to the gods, failed: Pylos was attacked and destroyed, and the people were killed or fled abroad; the site was never repopulated.

With the Mycenaean world in ruins, a dark age descended over Greece. Dark ages of this type were not uncommon in history as pastoralist tribes moved in, destroyed a more advanced civilization, and then moved on. Similar events had already taken place, for example when the Aryans invaded India in 1400 B.C.E. and destroyed the Harappan civilization, which had existed for over a thousand years. A similar phenomenon would take place later when German tribes destroyed the Western Roman Empire (376–476 C.E.). Dark ages share numerous characteristics: a drastic decline in the population, the destruction of cities, the disappearance of sophisticated art and architecture, the loss of basic technologies such as writing, the end of long-distance trade networks, and the disappearance of elaborate government and religious bureaucracies. It would be three centuries before the Greek recovery began.

Meanwhile the devastation moved east. In Anatolia, 13 major cities, including the Hittite capital at Hattusas, were destroyed, and most were never reoccupied. Hittite civilization was destroyed so thoroughly that even the memory of it would disappear until Hittite cities were discovered in the nineteenth century C.E.⁷ Cyprus was attacked as well at roughly the same time, and all four major cities on the island were sacked or abandoned. The tribesmen moved on by boat to the western coast of Asia, where they would suddenly appear and devastate the countryside. The combination of these attacks and attacks from inland tribes led to the devastation of all of Syria and Palestine; 18 major cities were destroyed in all. One city, Ugarit, like Pylos, provided an eyewitness account of events leading up to the city's destruction. In 1179, Ugarit was expecting an attack by seaborne invaders. Hammurapi, the king of Ugarit, sent an urgent appeal to the king of the neighboring city of Alalakh. The letter seems to indicate that the Hittites were already under attack and that Ugarit, as a Hittite vassal, had contributed chariots and soldiers to its defense. If the Hittite armies were overrun, it is possible that the Ugarit contingent was also overwhelmed and was therefore unable to return to defend the home city. The Ugarit navy was in Lycia, on the southern coast of Anatolia, again likely helping to defend against expected coastal landings by seaborne troops. Ugarit was defenseless, and seven enemy ships, possibly carrying as many as 700 men, had already been sighted in different places in the region. Again we see how quickly a fleet could appear, disembark, attack, and then disappear, leaving civilized peoples little opportunity to defend themselves. The letter was never sent; the city was captured and plundered

and then destroyed. The attack came so quickly that archeologists have discovered people eating, with their food and utensils still on the table.

Last to face the barbarian wave was Egypt. Egypt had been in decline since the death of Rameses II, in 1213, and was further weakened when many of its vassals in the Near East were overrun by the invaders. Between 1208 and 1176, Egypt faced four major invasions from both land and sea, the first during the reign of Merneptah (r. 1213–1202), the thirteenth son and successor of Rameses II, and the last three during the reign of Rameses III (r. 1186–1154), the second ruler of Egypt's Dynasty XX (1188–1069) and possibly a great-grandson of Rameses II. Since Egypt would survive these attacks, detailed records of these events survive, far more detailed than the random tablets of Pylos and Ugarit. Three of the attacks came by land, from the west along the rim of North Africa. These attacks were led by the Libyans, who recruited complements of soldiers from all over the world, including northern Greece, Cilicia, Lycia, and places as far away as southern Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia. The Libyans and their allies were motivated by the proverbial wealth of Egypt and the prospect of plunder, as well as the prospect of claiming territory in the fertile Nile Valley, and especially by current events, which made clear that it was now possible to defeat even large chariot armies.

The first attack was led by King Meryre of Libya, in 1208. This in part may have been retaliation for the successful campaigns of Rameses II in the west, during which he planted numerous Egyptian garrisons in Libyan territory. Meryre brought his wife, children, and throne, apparently with the intention of settling in Egypt after his military conquest. He was joined by numerous other warriors eager to get their hands on Egyptian wealth. In the Battle of Periri, Merneptah and the Egyptians defeated the invaders, killing more than 9,000 of the enemy. Two further invasions, in 1182 and 1176, were again defeated by the Egyptians, this time led by Rameses III. According to Rameses, more than 15,000 of the enemy were killed or captured.

The fourth and greatest invasion was that of the "Sea-Peoples" in 1179. According to the Egyptians, the Sea-Peoples were a coalition of many different tribes brought from all over the Mediterranean by ship to attack Egypt. These peoples included the Philistines (or Peleset), the Tjekker, the Tursha (possibly Etruscans), the Shekelesh, the Weslesh, and the Denyen (or Danaans). To face this invasion, Rameses III was forced to adopt new military tactics, some of which were borrowed from the invaders themselves. It is possible that Rameses had received information concerning the destruction elsewhere and incorporated some of these new ideas into his own army. First, Rameses did not use his chariots as his main strike force; instead, they played only a supporting role. He relied on his infantry, many of whom were using the same types of weapons, armor, and tactics as the invaders. Adopting these changes allowed Rameses and the Egyptians to win a great battle at Djahi in 1179. Rameses also defeated another force in the Nile River before they had a chance to disembark. Rameses stationed archers, who normally would have been in the chariots, on board his boats. Their compound bows were very effective, because the invaders were trapped on their vessels with no room to move and without effective long-range missiles.

Egypt had indeed been saved, but its victory came at great cost. Rameses III was the last great pharaoh, and after his death, in 1154, Egypt declined steadily. The Egyptian Empire had been lost and would never be regained, and Egypt's trading partners had all been destroyed, leaving the country in desperate economic straits. Eventually, ancient Egypt would be swallowed up by a succession of foreign powers, including Kush, Libya, Assyria, Persia, Alexander the Great and Macedonia, and, eventually, Rome.

By 1100 B.C.E., three of the great centers of civilization had been destroyed: Mycenaean Greece, the Hittite Empire, and the Near East. Egypt survived, but in a much reduced state. The end of the Bronze Age demonstrated the vital importance of military technology and tactics on the course of history, for, when civilizations are unable to defend themselves, they risk military defeat, destruction, and oblivion.

Two

War in the Iron Age

THE IRON REVOLUTION

Though it might not seem so from the era's name, the use of iron did begin before the end of the Bronze Age. However, the use of iron was not widespread, and in fact almost all metal artifacts that have been discovered from the late Bronze Age were, not surprisingly, bronze. It was not until the twelfth century that the ratio of bronze to iron goods began to shift. Part of the reason for the change was the massive disruptions of trade routes, which occurred by 1100. Bronze is made by combining copper with tin; both metals, and especially tin, were rare to begin with, explaining the high cost of bronze armor and weapons. The main source of tin seems to have been the British Isles, and when contact with Britain was lost because of the invasions, it became nearly impossible to import tin and hence nearly impossible to make bronze. Iron is far more common than copper and tin and is, of course, an element, meaning that no additives are necessary. Iron is therefore easier to procure and far cheaper than bronze. In the Dark Age that followed the collapse of the Bronze Age, people needed metals that were near at hand; therefore, iron was increasingly used to make almost everything. Artifacts recovered from the 900s B.C.E. show that for the first time iron was used more than bronze, a dramatic change from just two centuries before. The gap would grow larger even as the Dark Age finally came to an end and new civilizations, with their accompanying long-distance trade networks, developed. Iron eventually would be the metal of choice for almost all armor and weapons made during the rest of antiquity. This meant that almost all the soldiers, from every army, used iron weapons, and if they used armor, that armor was usually made of iron, as well. The impact of this cheaper metal on ancient warfare would be incalculable.

THE INFANTRY REVOLUTION

The introduction of iron also coincided with another very important military development. During the Bronze Age, the most important implement of

war was the chariot, and the most important soldiers were therefore those who either drove the vehicle or the archers who fired arrows from it. Large infantry units played a role in Bronze Age warfare but generally did so as support troops. It was only late in the period that foot soldiers developed methods to overcome the chariots and therefore inaugurated a new period of warfare in which the infantry was the most prevalent and most important element on the battlefield. Those infantryman would, of course, now be armed with iron weapons and, in some cases, iron armor.

THE CAVALRY REVOLUTION

After the collapse of the Bronze Age, chariots were no longer employed as weapons of war, but they were still used by wealthier citizens as luxurious modes of transport or, later, for races in the Olympic Games and in the Circus Maximus, the Hippodrome, and similar arenas. There were some exceptions to the rule. C. Julius Caesar encountered warriors in Britain who were still riding chariots into battle. The Persians and others used “scythed” chariots equipped with blades that extended out from the axles of their wheels. Anyone caught on either side of a chariot equipped in such a manner would of course be literally sliced in two. However, chariots’ effectiveness was limited. In the three major battles the Persians fought against Alexander the Great, chariots were ineffective.

A new type of warrior appeared on the battlefield to replace the chariot. By the mid-800s B.C.E., the first evidence of cavalry in battle appears on Assyrian reliefs. These were light cavalymen armed only with a bow and equipped with no other weapons or armor. These cavalymen worked in teams; one man rode his horse and held the reins of his comrade’s horse (there were as yet neither saddles nor stirrups for a rider to steady himself without his hands on the reins, necessitating a comrade guiding his horse). The man driving the two horses was also holding a shield as protection for both. This was of course very similar to the functions of the chariot in battle; before two men rode in a chariot pulled by two horses, one drove, and the other used his bow against the enemy. Now the two men were on separate horses with no vehicle but one was still fulfilling the old battlefield role. However, there were advantages for this new type of warfare. Men on horseback could function on difficult terrain unsuitable for chariot wheels, and, maybe more important, two men on horseback without a chariot were far cheaper than two men in a chariot pulled by two horses. More soldiers could thus be put into the field.

By the 700s, new ways to rein a horse were developed. This brought increased control for an individual rider, and for the first time a single rider on a single horse could act independently in battle; riders working in tandem were no longer necessary. This literally doubled the firepower of these cavalymen; instead of two horses and one archer, now there would be one archer for each horse, making every cavalryman an offensive weapon. The introduction of these new methods also diversified cavalry units. The light cavalryman remained armed with only a bow and wore no armor. But now

new, heavier cavalry was introduced for the first time thanks to the increased control of the mount by the rider. The heavy cavalry could hold heavier weapons, most notably a lance. Cavalrymen could also make use of armor not only for themselves but also for their horses.

The introduction of cavalry into ancient battles drastically affected the way they were fought, since cavalry could do so many different things. These various functions are seen later in discussions of specific battles and specific wars, but several general points about the importance of cavalry can be made now. Cavalry could be used as shock troops to punch holes in enemy infantry formations or to quickly exploit gaps that appeared in enemy lines. Cavalry could obviously do these things much faster than men fighting on foot, who, moving more slowly, might not be able to exploit these gaps or generate the necessary momentum to puncture an opposing line. The mobility and speed of the cavalry could also be used to outflank enemy formations and to attack them from the sides or from the rear. Infantry formations, as will be seen, were very difficult to attack from the front, but, if somehow they could be hit from the sides or behind, not only would they suffer increasing casualties but the very thought of being surrounded might produce panic in the men and induce them to surrender or flee. Infantry, again moving much more slowly, would have great difficulties getting around an opponent to carry out such a flank or rear attack, since the opponent would have plenty of time to adjust. Cavalry could also be used to chase down enemies who had fled from the battlefield, since they moved faster and would not become as fatigued as men pursuing on foot. And, last, cavalry could add an element of surprise, which was usually difficult to achieve in ancient warfare. Infantry moved relatively slowly, as slow as their slowest unit, so slowly that their movements were usually noticed and then reported to the enemy. Cavalry could, on some occasions, move so quickly that their approach would not be noticed until they literally appeared before a city or on a battlefield.

The iron, infantry, and cavalry revolutions dramatically altered the way ancient battles were fought and ensured that they would be very different from those of the Bronze Age. The changes made in warfare early in the Iron Age would, in fact, last for the rest of antiquity: armies consisting mostly of infantry, supported by cavalry using iron weapons and on some occasions iron armor would grace the battlefields on which the Assyrians fought in the eighth century B.C.E. and on the fields which the dying Roman Empire would fight its last battles 13 centuries later. There would be improvements in strategy, tactics, and the sophistication of warfare, including improved armor and weapons and more specialized military units, but the basic characteristics of combat would remain unchanged.

THE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

The first people to take advantage of these dramatic military developments were the Assyrians, the “People of Ashur,” their chief god, to whom

they would devote the conquest of a vast empire. In the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E., the Assyrians subjugated the greatest empire the world had yet seen, using a sophisticated military that incorporated the new elements noted earlier, specifically large infantry units armed with the latest military technology integrated with both light and heavy cavalry.

In the year 746, an Assyrian general named Pul led an uprising against the king Assurnirari (r. 755–746). Pul was victorious; he executed Assurnirari and took the throne, taking the name Tiglathpileser III (r. 746–727), a name made famous by Tiglathpileser I (r. 1115–1077), who had established the Old Assyrian Empire. Tiglathpileser III lived up to his new name by conquering the Neo- or New Assyrian Empire, which included Syria, Palestine, Israel, Judah, Sumeria, and Babylonia. In 722, his younger son Sargon II took the throne (r. 722–705) and completed the conquest of the empire by absorbing Egypt. This was the largest empire ever seen; for the first time in history, Mesopotamia, the Near East, and Egypt were all under one government.

As in all great empires, a major factor in Assyrian success was its army. During the eighth and seventh centuries, the Assyrians built the most sophisticated war machine the world had ever seen. They had the biggest army in history, maybe as many as 120,000 soldiers drawn from both the Assyrian population and from conquered peoples. There were four major divisions of the army: the household bodyguards of the king and his family; the professional military specialists such as cavalry, archers, and slingers financed by the state; the “King’s Men,” meaning the men who had been given land by the state in return for military service; and the citizen militia, which included not only a professional standing army but also reserve units consisting of veterans who had already served their time but could be called up in periods of crisis. Assyrian soldiers fought not only for their god Ashur but also for money; it was traditional to divide up the plunder, which could often be substantial, among all the men. Assyrian soldiers made use of the new iron armor and iron weaponry, and they are the first people known to have used cavalry in battle. Though early in their history the Assyrians used chariots, cavalry eventually made the chariots obsolete because of its low cost, its tactical flexibility, and its ability to fight in many places chariots could not. The Assyrian soldier made use of large system of military highways and sometimes could move 30 miles in a single day. The Assyrians also had one other military advantage: their siegecraft. All ancient cities, of course, had walls to defend against attack. Usually the only way to induce a population protected by walls to surrender was to blockade the city and wait until the food ran out. This was very time-consuming, and sieges were difficult to maintain. The Assyrians perfected the art of breaking into fortified cities. They employed battering rams, siege towers, and sappers to tunnel under walls.

The king ran the empire from the capital at Nineveh (in northern Mesopotamia). Below him were the *pakhati* (governors), who ran the provinces of the empire. They collected the taxes on a regular basis, they enforced the laws, they served in the king’s army, and they collected soldiers to serve with them when called. Garrisons of Assyrian soldiers were permanently stationed in

the provinces to help the governors control the local population. The military roads noted earlier sped messengers to and from the capital. Every road had a post station, and messages could reach Nineveh in less than a week from even the farthest reaches of the empire. This imperial administration was the first of its kind and would provide a model for many of the empires that followed.

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

Cyrus II the Great and the Conquest of the Empire, 559–513

In 559, a new king took the Persian throne: Cyrus II (r. 559–530) of the Achaemonid Dynasty, later known as “The Great.” In 559, he was still a vassal to the Median king Astyages, but he quickly reversed the situation, beginning with a series of campaigns in 550–549. The Median army was defeated, their capital at Ecbatana was taken and plundered, and Median territory fell to Cyrus. Astyages was captured but spared, and Cyrus married his daughter Amytis. The Medians were absorbed into the Persian state, and, though they were subordinate to the Persians, Median soldiers, officers, and government officials would play a large role in Persian affairs.

The speed with which imperial peoples arose, sometimes out of obscurity, to take over a vast empire is often stunning. Persia was relatively weak when Cyrus became king, especially in comparison to its more powerful neighbors. Yet, by conquering the Medes, Cyrus had quickly doubled the resources of his kingdom, specifically the wealth and manpower of his kingdom, meaning that his ability to wage war had now increased. Suddenly, Persia was no longer a second-rate power, stuck in a historical backwater east of the Fertile Crescent. Now Persia had the power to expand further. Once the ball started rolling, once the initial enemy was conquered and the power of the state increased, further conquest was possible. With each new conquest, power increased and further expansion was possible. Eventually, under Cyrus and his successors Cambyses II (r. 530–522) and Darius I (r. 521–486), Persia conquered Lydia (central Anatolia, 546); Ionia (the western coast of Anatolia, 540); Babylonia (539); eastern territories such as Parthia, Drangiana, Aria, Bactria, Sogdiana, and Gandhara (539–530); Egypt and Kush (by 522); the Indus Valley (518); Thrace and lands as far north as the Danube; and northern Greece, subjugating territory as far south as Mount Olympus (516). Darius I would eventually become “King of Kings,” ruling an empire that stretched from the Balkans and Egypt in the west all the way into India in the east, by far the biggest empire the world had ever seen.

The Persian Army

The empire was governed by more than 20 *satraps* (governors) who ruled over provinces or *satrapies* on behalf of the king. The *satraps* served at the

king's pleasure; they were often members of the royal family and were usually Persians or Medes. On some occasions, the *satrap* was a local, native ruler whom the king had allowed to remain in his position after he acknowledged his new status as a vassal. The *satrap's* capital was the center of provincial administration; he enforced the king's laws and collected his taxes, among other government business. The *satraps* were the eyes and ears of the king, keeping watch over the various subject peoples. Often the *satraps* had soldiers under their direct command, stationed in their *satrapy* to help control the local population and defend against outside attack. Garrisons and forts were placed at strategic points around the empire. Because the *satraps* were invested with so much power and because they were often great distances from the king, it should not be surprising that sometimes these provincial governors rose up in rebellion in an attempt to seize the throne.

Royal roads helped tie this kingdom together and provided easy transport for the king's soldiers. The king's messengers quickly brought news from all over the empire. Herodotus (490–425), a Greek historian, reported that Neither rain nor sleet nor dark of night would keep them from their appointed rounds.¹

Ultimately, the key to Persia's success in conquering and holding such a vast empire for more than two centuries was its army. Initially, the Persian army consisted of a militia of the king's Persian subjects. However, not all Persians participated. Only those with sufficient wealth to procure their own military equipment were liable for service; therefore, the levy, or *kara*, represented the wealthier elements of Persian society. As the empire grew, the *kara* remained the backbone of the army, but now an imperial levy conscripted not only poorer Persians but also subjugated ethnic groups into the army. Herodotus gives a detailed list of the various ethnic contingents that served in the Persian army, and the list includes practically every group in the empire, from Greeks and Egyptians in the west to Indians in the east and literally everyone in between. The Persian army was divided into units of tens, hundreds, and thousands. The thousand was the largest unit and was commanded by an officer called the *hazarapatis*. Like most of the important officers and military advisers of the king, the *hazarapatis* was usually from the Persian or Median nobility.

The average Persian was liable for military service between the ages of 20 and 50 but was not a professional; he would usually be called out only in times of emergency. However, the Persians did have a standing army, the *spada*, consisting of professional soldiers, attached to the king and ready to move at a moment's notice. These bodyguards represented the best, the elite of the Persian army. Altogether, there were 22,000 soldiers, all Persians, divided into four units, which were, in descending order of value and merit, 1,000 spearmen, 1,000 cavalymen, 10,000 infantry, and 10,000 cavalry. Herodotus describes them:

Behind Xerxes [r. 486–465] marched 1,000 spearmen . . . all men of the best and noblest Persian blood with golden apples on the butt of their spears; then 1,000 picked

Persian cavalry again chosen for quality, out of all that remained a body of Persian infantry 10,000 strong. Of these 1,000 had golden pomegranates instead of spikes at the butt-end of their spears and were arrayed surrounding the other 9,000 whose spears had silver pomegranates . . . the infantry immediately behind Xerxes had golden apples [at the butt-end of their spears]. The 10,000 infantry were followed by a squadron of 10,000 Persian horse, after which there was gap of more than 400 yards, and then came the remainder of the army.²

The 10,000 infantry constituted the most famous unit in the Persian army: the Immortals. They were called this because the number of men in this unit was never allowed to fall below 10,000; if any soldiers were incapacitated or killed or grew too old to fight, a replacement would immediately be found, so it was as if no one from the unit ever died.

The uniform of these elite Persian soldiers was described by Herodotus:

the dress of these troops consisted of the tiara or soft felt cap, embroidered tunic with sleeves . . . trousers, for arms they carried light wicker shields, quivers slung below them, short spears, powerful bows with cane arrows, and daggers swinging from their belt beside the right thigh.³

As the description makes clear, protective armor was rarely used by the Persians; metal helmets, breastplates, grieves, and shields were almost unknown. This lack of armor usually did not hinder Persian success, since most of the peoples they fought were outfitted in similar fashion.

The Persians did have a number of auxiliary units. These included a squadron of scythed chariots, a camel corps, and, in at least one famous battle, a small contingent of Indian war-elephants.

The size of the Persian army has been a point of intense debate since Herodotus first informed his readers that King Xerxes' forces numbered 1.7 million men in 480. The actual figures were obviously much smaller than this but were still substantial. Xerxes actually had about 200,000 men for the invasion of Greece in 480, and Darius III led about 150,000 men 149 years later at the Battle of Gaugamela.

The warrior ethos of the Persian nobility was as strong as will be seen later in Sparta or Rome. Persian culture was suffused with military themes: the two leading indicators of manliness were, first, prowess in battle and, second, the production of numerous sons. Persian kings often led campaigns in person and were usually joined by most of their extended family and most of the nobility. Even a great king could write about his military abilities with obvious pride. The king was not just a commander but also an accomplished fighter, skilled at all aspects of military service. This was the ideal to which all Persians, especially the nobility, aspired.

Nobles who served in the cavalry were given land by the king, a "fief," which allowed them to spend most of their time training for war. They made up not only the king's cavalry but also his officer corp.

The Persian nobility represented the backbone of the Persian army. So much importance was placed on military prowess that military "schools" were established that closely resembled the famous *agoge* of Sparta. Techni-

cally, all Persians were eligible, but, because of the costs involved, in practice only the nobles participated. From the age of five, chosen nobles were trained to use the bow, throw the javelin, and ride. They were trained to endure cold, heat, and rain and to march under any type of difficult weather. Their food was spare, and they were taught to live off the land if necessary. They hunted on a regular basis and competed in athletic contests, including running and tests of endurance. Their character was not ignored; they were taught Persian religion and respect for their god, Ahura Mazda, and they learned the history of their people and especially the noble deeds of heroic men. They were instructed on their duties to the Persian god, the Persian people, and especially the Persian king and the Achaemonid family. Last, they were trained to speak the truth, an item that was approvingly noted by numerous Greek historians.

Though the Persians were certainly not as harsh or as hated as the Assyrians, like all imperial peoples they of necessity exercised authority, sometimes ruthlessly, over their subjects. The Persian Empire did provide a number of benefits for their subjects: never before had such a large area been under one government, a government able to impose order, which brought peace and prosperity. However, never in history have any people been happy under the rule of others; in general, therefore, the Persians were hated by their subjects. The one thing that kept this empire in line, the one thing that kept all empires in line, was fear. In this case, it was fear that a rebellion would be crushed by the largest army in history. Thanks to its army and the imperial administration that supported it, the empire would last for more than two centuries, until the coming of Alexander the Great.

Three

War in Archaic Age Greece, 800–500 B.C.E.

WARFARE IN THE EARLY ARCHAIC AGE: THE SOLDIERS OF HOMER

Luckily, we do not have to rely solely on the limited archeological record to understand war during the early Archaic Age. Two epic poems, the first two works of Western literature, provide insight into military developments. These works are the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, attributed to a bard named Homer and composed during the second half of the eighth century B.C.E. The Trojan War (which Homer and his audience believed took place during the Mycenaean period around 1190) and its aftermath provide the main subject of the two works. According to Homer, the Greeks mustered 1,000 ships and 50,000 men for the attack on Troy. All the great Greek heroes participated, including Agamemnon, King of Mycenae and the most powerful ruler in Greece; his brother King Menelaus of Sparta, whose wife, Helen, had begun all the trouble by fleeing to Sparta with the Trojan prince Paris; King Nestor of Pylos; King Diomedes of Argos; King Odysseus of Ithaca; and the best of the Greek warriors, Achilles. However, the Trojan king Priam had 50 sons to lead his armies, the best of whom was Prince Hector. Most important of all, Troy was surrounded by huge walls built with the aid of the gods Apollo and Poseidon. Therefore, the Greeks spent the next 10 years besieging Troy. Though the *Iliad* actually covered only a six-week period during the tenth years of the war and does not include the war's conclusion, flashbacks in the second great epic, the *Odyssey*, describe the ultimate capture of the city through the use of the famous Trojan Horse. The *Odyssey's* main story recounts the trials endured by Odysseus after Troy's fall during his ultimately successful effort to return home to Ithaca.

Generally, the two stories do not depict the distant Mycenaean past but the early Archaic Age in which Homer lived. Homer therefore provides a glimpse into this world, a society infused with war. Homer included descriptions of the chariots, horses, bronze armor, and weapons used by his heroes:

Patroclus put on the shimmering bronze. He began by tying round his legs the splendid greaves, which were fitted with silver clips for the ankles. Next he put on his breast Achilles' beautiful cuirass, scintillating like the stars. Over his shoulders he slung

the bronze sword, with its silver studded hilt, and then the great thick shield. On his sturdy head he set the well-made helmet. It had a horsehair crest, and the plume nodded grimly on top. Last he picked up two powerful spears which suited his grip." His chariot driver was Automedon "the most reliable of drivers, keeping always within call," and his horses were "Xanthus and Bailus, the wind-swift and immortal pair."¹

In general, Homeric heroes were equipped as Patroclus was: with a shield made of several layers of oxhide covered by a sheet of bronze, a horsehair-plumed bronze helmet that covered both forehead and cheeks, corselet, belts outside and inside the corselet, and grieves with ankle guards. Usually they carried at least one and sometimes two spears for both thrusting and throwing, and, last, a bronze sword.

The most important talent in Homer's world was the ability to fight. All the great heroes had to be able to defend their *oikos* (household), their honor, and that of their family. Hector's hopes for his son Astyanax's future demonstrate the importance of military glory:

Zeus, grant that this boy of mine may be, like me, preeminent in Troy; as strong and brave as I; a mighty king of Ilium. May people say, when he comes back from battle, "Here is a better man than his father." Let him bring home the bloodstained armor of the enemy he has killed and make his mother happy.²

Achilles, of course, was granted a choice by the gods: a short but glorious life that would ensure that his name would live on forever or a long life of no renown in which his name would be quickly forgotten: "Destiny has left two choices open to me on my journey to the grave: fight at Troy and win undying fame or go home and have a long life and have my good name lost."³

He, of course, chose the former.

How did a fight proceed? If Homer can be believed, the most important fights were the duels fought by the great heroes. These duels were usually preceded by long speeches by the protagonists. For example, the fight between Achilles and Aeneas, Prince of Troy, sees both men speaking at length. Achilles first taunts Aeneas that he has bested the Trojan in an earlier encounter, one that ended with Aeneas fleeing for his life. Aeneas responds in typical *Iliad* fashion: "My lord Achilles you need not imagine that you are going to scare me with words as though I were a child, for if it comes to insults and abuse I am well prepared to give you equal measure."⁴

Aeneas, like so many other heroes on the point of impending battle, takes time to explain his illustrious royal pedigree and why that contributes so much to his abilities as a warrior. This pedigree is, of course, essential to any Homeric hero. Aeneas declares:

Dardanus was the son of Zeus, the Lord of the Clouds . . . Dardanus had a son King Erichonius who was the richest man on earth . . . Erichonius had a son called Tros, who was King of the Trojans; and Tros himself had three excellent sons, Ilus, Assaracus, and the godlike Ganymedes . . . Ilus was the father to the noble Laomedon, whose son was Priam . . . Assaracus was the father of Capys, whose son Anchises is my father, whereas Prince Hector is the son of Priam. That sir is my pedigree; such is the blood I claim.⁵

Once the talking is over, the battle commences. Homer certainly exaggerated or invented certain aspects of his story for dramatic effect, such as Aeneas's ability to lift a rock that two men during Homer's time could not. However, this literary license was provided to demonstrate the heroic nature of the men fighting at Troy. The battle scenes themselves must to some extent conform to what was generally known during Homer's time so that such scenes could be readily understandable to his audience.

For example, the chariot is used not as a platform from which to fight, as it was during the Bronze Age, but instead as a taxi to carry the nobles to and from the battle. Once there, the heroes dismount and then fight on foot against their opponent. We see on most occasions that the heroes throw spears at their opponents and then close with swords or, if possible, with a recovered spear. This occurs in the fights between Aeneas and Achilles, Paris and Menelaus, and Ajax and Hector. Battle axes and hatchets are also used. Bows are sometimes used even by the heroes. Prince Paris of Troy, whose seduction of Menelaus's wife, Helen, had started all the trouble, uses a bow, the weapon with which he will eventually kill Achilles. Odysseus's skill with the bow is obvious at the end of the *Odyssey* when he fires an arrow through the 12 ax-rings. If combatants have somehow lost their weapons, anything close at hand will do, and quite often Homeric heroes are seen picking up rocks with which to smite their enemies. Men often leave the battlefield when wounded, fatigued, or demoralized. If things go badly, with luck, a hero's chariot is nearby to whisk him quickly and safely out of the battle. If not, heroes have to pray for help from the gods, which fortunately for the more important characters is often forthcoming.

Homeric descriptions of warfare are usually dramatic, graphic, and realistic:

Achilles hit Demoleon on the side of his bronze helmet. The metal of the helmet failed to stop the eager spear. The point went through, pierced the bone and spattered the inside of the helmet with his brains. . . . Achilles struck Dryops full in the neck with his spear. Dryops came down with a crash at his feet. Achilles cast at Demuchus, he hit him on the knee and brought him down; then took his life with his long sword. . . . He struck Tros in the liver with his sword and the liver came out and drenched his lap with dark blood. Achilles then struck Mulius on the ear with a spear so hard that the bronze point came out the other ear. Deucalion, weighed down by Achilles' spear, looked death in the face. Achilles struck the man's neck with his sword and sent head and helmet flying off together.⁶

War was vitally important to all *basileis* (kings or chiefs): military ability and the loyalty of numerous soldiers allowed them to protect and expand their wealth and also translated into the political power necessary to control specific territories. A character named Sarpedon in Homer explains the connection among military service, political power, and economic wealth, not to mention prestige:

Why in Lycia do we receive special honors? Why are the choicest portions served us and our cups kept brimming, and why do men look up to us as if we were gods? Why do we have large estates by the river Xanthus, fair with orchards and wheat growing

land? It is because we take our stand at the head of all the Lycians and bear the brunt of the fight . . . we fight well and are ever at the front of battle.⁷

The famous drinking song of Hybrias, from the same period as Homer, corroborates this:

My great wealth is my spear and sword and fine animal hide shield, with these I sow, with these I reap, with these I tread out the sweet wine from the grape. Because of these I am called *basileus* [king]. As for those who do not dare to bear a spear and sword and shield . . . they all bend their knee in fear and do me reverence, addressing me as *basileus*.⁸

A *basileus* was expected to lead the defense of the community, to protect not just his land, animals, and wealth but also those of his people. He was also expected to lead them in campaigns outside the community. The *Odyssey* describes raids that were probably typical of this period:

The same wind which wafted me [Odysseus] from Troy brought me to Ismarus, the city of the Cicones. I sacked this place and destroyed the men who held it. Their wives and the rich plunder that we took from the town we divided so that no one, as far as I could help it, went short of his proper share.⁹

Odysseus also describes another similar incident when he and his men had come ashore on an island filled with potential plunder:

we fetched our curved bows and our long spears from the ships and let fly at the game. . . . There were twelve ships in my squadron: nine goats fell to each, while to me they made a special allotment of ten. So the whole day we sat and enjoyed this rich supply of meat, which we washed down with the mellow wine . . . there was still some in the ships' holds, for when we took the sacred citadel of the Cicones, every member of the company had drawn off a generous supply in jars.¹⁰

During Homer's time, these attacks probably involved relatively few people over a very short period time, but the descriptions in Homer of combat between nobles supported by lesser warriors is probably accurate. The expedition against Troy itself is merely an exaggerated example of the typical, small-scale, short-term raid. Troy, of course, is being attacked for the plunder its capture will bring, and the Greek heroes spend much of their time not just attacking Troy but also plundering neighboring communities. Homer has added dramatic flourishes to an account of war his audiences would have recognized. Troy, of course, is far greater and wealthier than any city of Homer's age. The size of the armies engaged is beyond anything cities of the eighth century could have put into the field. And the length of the war, 10 years, is longer than any conflict of the period could conceivably have lasted. However, the Trojan War probably represents an outsized example of war during this period.

THE HOPLITE PHALANX: WARFARE IN THE LATER ARCHAIC AGE, 650–500

The Archaic Age was a period of dramatic recovery for Greece; it would not only reverse the negative trends of the Dark Age but would also set the

stage for the Classical Age that followed. First, the population of Greece began to rise dramatically. Second, as usable land was occupied, Greeks began to migrate around the ancient world, establishing colonies in Italy, France, Spain, North Africa, Syria, and Anatolia and along the shores of the Black Sea. Third, colonization served not only to siphon off excess population from Greece but also to encourage and stimulate trade. Fourth, as the Greeks went out into the wider world and came into contact with older, more advanced peoples, they were able to learn and borrow important technologies, which helped the advancement of Greek civilizations. For example, the Greeks learned about coinage from the Lydians and borrowed the alphabet from the Phoenicians.

Military developments during the Archaic Age completely altered the nature and scale of Greek warfare, and introduced a new type of infantry soldier called the *hoplite*. Though some of the *hoplite's* equipment was similar to that of earlier periods, many improvements had been made, and in some cases entirely new military tools had been created. The date for the creation of these improved or new technologies has long been the subject of intense debate, but it is now generally agreed that by 650 the *hoplite* panoply was fully developed.

The *hoplite* wore defensive armor made of bronze or iron, which was new in Greece at this time. Iron made its way into Greece sometime during the Archaic Age; Homer has knowledge of it and mentions it on a few occasions, though almost all of his references to metal used for military purposes are to bronze. The *hoplite* carried a shield called the *hoplon*, from which the term *hoplite* derived. It was much different from the earlier tall, rectangular Mycenaean shields. The new shield was round, concave like a bowl, about three feet in diameter and roughly an inch thick. The shield was usually made mostly of wood covered with a sheet of bronze or iron, on which were put decorations. The shield weighed roughly 15 pounds, so to enable men to carry it easily into battle, two new grips were developed, one strapped around the forearm, and the other was held by the hand. The shield was held by the left arm, allowing a *hoplite* to protect his left side while keeping his right arm free to attack.

Next came the breastplate, which, at least during the Archaic Age, was called the bell corselet and weighed between 30 and 40 pounds. Other, more stylish breastplates, such as the muscled breastplate, would develop later.

Greaves were worn to protect the part of the leg from the knee to the foot, which was not covered by the shield or the breastplate.

Last but not least was the helmet. Though there were many types of Greek helmets, the most popular model was the Corinthian helmet. It was dramatically different from the headgear used by the Mycenaeans and like many of the items being discussed may have been borrowed from outside civilizations; it may have had Assyrian ancestry. These helmets weighed about five pounds and covered most of the head and the back of the neck. It provided maximum protection, but there were only small openings for the eyes, nose, and mouth, meaning peripheral vision would be nonexistent

and hearing would be extremely difficult, as well. The helmet was extremely uncomfortable; there was little or no padding inside to cushion blows to the head, and the heat and lack of ventilation must have often been unbearable. On top of the helmet was a horsehair crest designed to make a *hoplite* appear taller and more formidable to his opponent, to provide some defense against arrows or other projectiles coming from above, and to deflect blows from sword or spear.

Beginning in the Archaic Age, Greeks began making weapons that employed iron rather than bronze. Greek *hoplites* employed two weapons: the spear and the sword. The spear was usually the more important of the two and was used for thrusting at an enemy, not for throwing. It was between six and nine feet long and about one inch in diameter and weighed around three pounds. The shaft was made of wood and the spearhead and buttspike made of iron. The *hoplite* also carried a short, broad slashing sword, also made of iron.

At the same time the Greeks developed this new offensive and defensive equipment, they also adopted new ways to fight. The *phalanx*, invented by 650, was a new type of battle formation that developed to take full advantage of the new military technology just discussed and was ideal for an army facing forward with little lateral mobility. Mycenaean and Dark Age warfare seem to have consisted of relatively small numbers of men fighting in open order, possibly similar to the duels described by Homer. Homer does make shadowy references to masses of soldiers fighting in the background while the great heroes fought their duels, and, though these masses have been dubbed the “*protophalanx*” by historians, the exact process by which the *protophalanx* developed into the later *phalanx* is unknown. The *phalanx* was essentially a very long rectangular formation consisting of men packed very closely together, literally shoulder to shoulder. The typical *phalanx* was eight men deep, though some variations are known. Carrying the shield with his left arm, the *hoplite* would have had his right side protected by the shield of his neighbor, and the closer the neighbor the better. Each *hoplite* of course was unable to see much to his left or right, and he was not able to hear clearly, since helmets generally had no earholes; he was therefore dependent on his fellow soldiers to help protect him.

There are continuing arguments as to what came first: did the new technology spark the new style of fighting, or did changes in the style of fighting lead to demands for new type of technology? The answer to this chicken-and-egg debate will probably never be known definitively. However, what we can say with some certainty is that by 650 or thereabouts, both the new *hoplite* panoply and the *phalanx* style of fighting were fully developed, and both would remain part of the ancient Greek military experience for centuries to come.

These changes led to a dramatic increase in the size of Greek armies. Throughout ancient Greek history, armor, weapons, and other military necessities were not provided by the state. Instead, each individual soldier had to provide his own equipment and anything else he needed while on

campaign. Therefore, the only people who served in the army were those with a certain amount of money, who could afford to do so. Poorer citizens would not be allowed to perform military service. During the Dark Age, military equipment was made exclusively of bronze, which was extremely rare and therefore very expensive; only kings or aristocrats such as Homer's heroes could afford this type of equipment. During the Archaic Age, iron, a much more common and therefore cheaper metal was used. Also, the development of an extensive, complex trade network linking Greece, the Greek colonies, and the outside world meant that the price of both iron and bronze declined. At the same time, there was a dramatic rise in the population, with a concomitant rise in the wealth of individual Greeks. Quite simply, far more people acquired money, whether through farming or professions connected with trade and industry. Most of these people were not fabulously wealthy, but they did accumulate enough money to purchase the necessary, cheaper *hoplite* panoply to serve in the army. Whereas during the Dark Age city-state armies must have numbered in the low hundreds, by 500 the bigger Greek states could put thousands of *hoplites* into the field.

The Face of *Hoplite* Battle

Greeks generally adhered to a certain code of conduct when it was time to fight, as both armies were usually allowed to arrive at the battlefield and move into their formations before the battle would actually begin.¹¹ *Hoplite* battles were usually fought on large, wide-open plains with as few obstructions as possible so that the entire *phalanx* would be able to deploy. Since the *phalanx* was usually at least eight men deep, it would often need more than a mile to spread out properly. Especially early on, there was little in the way of specialty units such as cavalry corps or troops lightly armed with bows or slings; almost exclusively, battles were decided by the *hoplite* infantry. There were generals in early Greek warfare, but, since battle was relatively simple and straightforward, they often had little impact on the tactical course of a battle. Instead, a general would be among the men on the right side of the battle line, the position of honor in a Greek army. It was expected that he would share in the hazards of battle and in fact no self-respecting general of the period, inspired by stories of Homeric heroes, would wish to be behind the lines in relative safety. Not surprisingly, it was not unusual for generals to be killed even in victory, the value of their presence in the battle line to inspire their men was worth the risk. Generals traditionally delivered some sort of speech before the battle to fire up their men. It was also the generals who would decide when to move forward and when to charge, though, on many occasions, in the heat of the moment, the men would act without a general's command.

When the men were properly deployed, when the general had made a rousing speech to inspire his soldiers, and when the proper religious ceremonies had been completed, the general would order his men to advance. A trumpet would sound and the men, sometimes fortified by wine, would begin to move toward the enemy as the opposing army began moving toward them. Flute players moved with the men to keep them marching in

step and to prevent them from moving at different speeds and breaking apart the formation. The men would also be singing a *paean*, a religious song to appeal for divine help and to lift their spirits. In general, *hoplites* moved at a steady pace to conserve energy, though on a few notable occasions they would sprint toward the enemy. Their spears would be held underhand for thrusting and would be the first weapon they used against their opponents. Both sides would usually be yelling by this point, attempting to intimidate or frighten their opponents. Apparently, just as they came into proximity with the enemy, the soldiers would increase their speed so that they would collide with the enemy with maximum force for their weapons. The difficulty of the march across the no-man's-land could decide if an army would be successful: were they tired, did various obstacles impede their progress, and, most important, were they able to stay in formation?

When the two armies came together, there was, according to ancient sources, a horrible, violent, thudding collision. One of the earliest accounts of *hoplite* warfare comes from a Spartan general named Tyrtaeus who lived around 650 B.C.E.; it is possible he used what follows as a speech before battle to rally his men:

O young men, stand beside each other and fight. Do not begin shameful flight or fear. . . . Let each man hold, standing firm, both feet planted on the ground, biting his lip with his teeth, covering with the belly of his broad shield his thighs, his breast and shoulders . . . let each man, closing with the enemy, fighting hand-to-hand with long spear or sword, wound and take him; and setting foot against foot, and resting shield against shield, crest against crest, helmet against helmet let him fight his man breast to breast, grasping the hilt of his sword or of his long spear. For the man is not *agathos* [brave] in war, unless he endures seeing the bloody slaughter, and standing close reach out for the foe. This is *arête* [honor], this is the best and loveliest prize for the young man to win. A common good for the whole *polis* and all the *demos* [people], when a man holds, firm among the fighters, unflinchingly. . . . For it is a fine thing for an *agathos* man to die, falling among the front-fighters, fighting for his homeland.¹²

When the two armies collided, the air would be filled with new, deafening sounds: bodies, iron, wood, and bronze all crashing together; followed by the sounds of bones breaking and flesh being punctured or torn, the sounds of men exerting themselves to the limits of their endurance, their groaning and moaning, cries of pain and cries for help, and, of course, the sounds of men dying sudden or, even worse, agonizingly slow deaths. There were also new smells: men sweating profusely under the hot Greek sun, the smells of new wounds and blood, even the smells emanating from men who had literally soiled themselves in fear. The sights would be horrible, as well: men would have a close-up view of close friends or relatives dying in every conceivable way, wounds caused by thrusting spears, and blood covering everything, making the ground and weapons slippery. If weapons were lost or broken, soldiers resorted to actual hand-to-hand fighting by grabbing at the hair and beards of their opponents and using their hands and even their teeth if necessary. Tyrtaeus provides us with a glimpse into the horrors of battle: a soldier “lies fallen in the front line, breathing out his brave soul in the dust while holding his bloody genitals in his dear hands. It is a . . . sight . . . foul to see: his naked flesh.”¹³

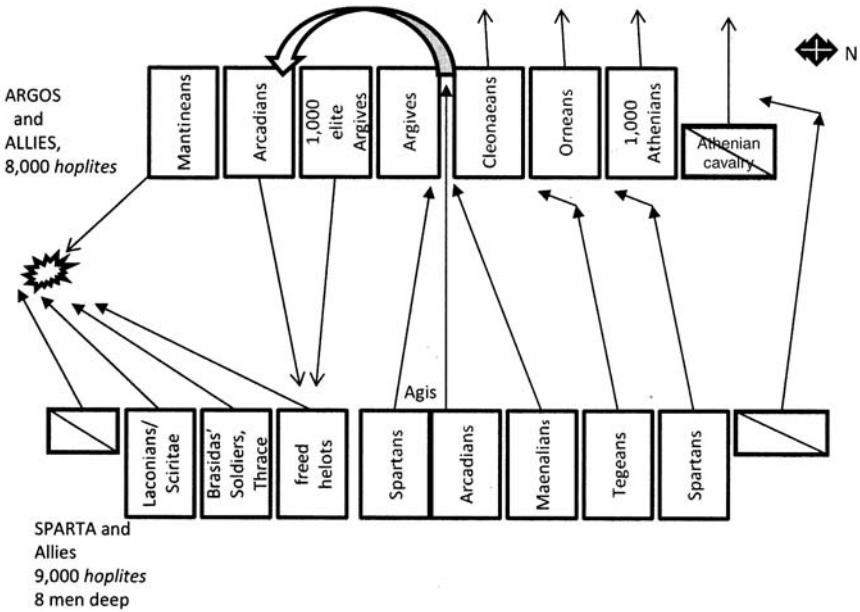
Since the soldiers were packed very close together and because their helmets provided them little visibility, they were often unable to get a clear idea as to what was going on in the battle, even whether their side was doing well or whether they were in danger. This lack of knowledge further contributed to their trials.

Once the two lines had collided, there came the *othismos*, the great push, as men from the rear ranks began pushing forward, shoving their own comrades against the enemy line. This is where the battle was decided, literally in the trenches, amongst these *hoplite* infantry soldiers.

There were two keys to *hoplite* battle. The first was to hold your *phalanx* together despite the awful carnage in which your *phalanx* was involved, and the second, the flip side, was somehow to break the enemy *phalanx* by causing and exploiting gaps in the enemy line. These gaps could be caused by three things: one, as the two armies merged together and the killing began, men would begin to fall; two, through the natural movements of a *phalanx*, its unity would fray; or three, psychological factors would become important as men became more and more fearful that the battle was not going well and that if they did not bail out they would soon die. It did not matter if the battle was truly being lost; what was important was what the soldiers perceived to be true. Panic was such a powerful force in ancient battles because it could doom even armies that had suffered very few casualties. Whatever the cause, when gaps appeared in an army, the two masses took on the consistency of liquid as they flowed toward that gap. It was imperative for an army to fill that gap with reinforcements flowing forward from the rear ranks; it was equally imperative for the opposing army to flow forward to exploit that gap if possible. Ebb and flow would be a constant in *hoplite* battle as gaps appeared and then were filled. Finally, one side was unable to recover, unable to flow into the gaps that had developed or been forced open by the enemy. Either too many of their men had already fallen, or the men in the rear ranks of the *phalanx* had begun to fear the battle was going against them and had ceased to push, believing it was time to start contemplating an escape. As the gap remained open, further enemy soldiers, pushed from behind by their own men, would flood in, looking to enlarge the gap. Napoleon once said that there is one moment in a battle when the least maneuver decided the battle, "like a drop of water which makes the cup run over." When that moment occurred in an ancient battle, one *phalanx* collapsed, and the battle was effectively decided. In rare cases, *hoplites* could make an orderly retreat with minimal casualties. In others, fear overcame any rational thought of an orderly withdrawal, and soldiers ran as fast as they possibly could to get away, in some cases even abandoning their precious and expensive *hoplite* armor and weapons in an effort to move more quickly. An army that has lost its unity and has been forced to run away is defenseless, and pursuing soldiers were often able to inflict numerous casualties.

It is believed that because of the energy necessary to fight, especially in the hot summer sun, battles would not stretch beyond one hour before exhaustion set in. It has also been calculated that on average the winning

Figure 3.1
Mantineia, 418



side in a *hoplite* battle lost around 5 percent of its men, while the losers lost nearly 15 percent.

A Classic *Hoplite* Battle: Mantineia, 418

In 418, a “classic” *hoplite* battle was fought in the Peloponnese at Mantineia (see Figure 3.1). Thucydides (460–400), a fifth-century Athenian historian and general, provides a contemporary look at *hoplite* armies in action by someone who was very familiar with the topic.

At Mantineia, the opposing armies were drawn up in the classic *phalanx* formation: lines eight men deep spread out in rectangular groups over more than a half of mile. On one side were the Spartans and their allies numbering some 9,000 men, most of whom were *hoplites*. Since the Spartans had more soldiers, their line extended just beyond that of their enemy. Running from west to east and facing north, the Spartan line included 600 Sciritae from Arcadia, who were always given the honor of holding the left part of the line; the survivors of Brasidas’ Spartan army from Thrace; a unit of freed *helots* (slaves); a large number of Spartans holding the center and led by one of their two kings, Agis II, and spearheaded by his elite bodyguard of 300 men on foot; a unit of Arcadians from Heraea; and a force of Maenalian and Tegeans; on the right wing was another formation of Spartans. The Spartan line was flanked on both wings by cavalry. The men of each unit were drawn up with their fellow citizens; altogether, therefore, there were eight individual

phalanx formations in addition to the two cavalry units, strung together to form one long continuous line that, it was hoped, if all went well, would stay together so that there would be no gaps in between these units that could be exploited by the enemy.

Opposing them was a coalition of city-states that included contingents from numerous states. This line stretched west to east and faced south. From right to left, it included units from Mantinea and Arcadia; an elite force of 1,000 soldiers from Argos; in the center, the bulk of the Argive army, followed by contingents of Cleonaeans and Orneans, and, on the left, 1,000 Athenian *hoplites*. Altogether there were 8,000 *hoplites* in seven *phalanx* formations joined together to form a continuous line. Athenian cavalry protected the left wing.

As usually happened, once the battle lines were formed, speeches were made by the various generals to encourage their men. Mantinean generals told their men that winning the battle would bring them their freedom, while losing meant they would become slaves of Sparta. The Argive generals urged their men to avenge the many humiliations they had endured at the hands of the neighboring Spartans and to regain the primacy they had long ago held in the Peloponnesus. The Athenian generals told their men that a victory at Mantinea would cripple Sparta and prevent it from ever attacking Attica again. The Spartans had a different tradition: each man encouraged his neighbors in line and sang songs of war.

Once the preliminaries were out of the way, the battle began. Usually in *hoplite* battles, the right wing, with the bravest soldiers, would carry the initial attack to the enemy. So the Spartans on the right and in the center began to move forward, supported by, west to east, the Arcadians of Heraea, the Maeonians, and the Tegeans. The Spartans did not run but instead moved steadily to the sounds of the flute, the music allowing them to keep in step and stay in ranks. This was important because if gaps appeared that the enemy could exploit, the line could be broken. Thucydides tells us that it “always happened” that once the two lines came close together, many men would break ranks, overcome by the heat of battle in an effort to get at the enemy.

On the allied right, the Mantineans were advancing with “great violence and fury,” moving right to outflank the Spartan left. Again Thucydides provides insight:

It is true of all armies that when they are moving into action, the right wing tends to get unduly extended and each side overlaps the enemy left with his right. This is because fear makes every man want to do his best to find protection for his unarmed side in the shield of the man next to him on the right [since all men wore the shield on the left arm] thinking that the closer the shields are locked together the safer he will be. The fault originally comes from the man on the extreme right of the front line who is always trying to keep his own unarmed side beyond the enemy, and his fear spreads to the other who follows his example.¹⁴

The Mantineans were therefore extending far beyond the Spartan line. The Spartan king, Agis II, saw this movement of the enemy right and quickly

ordered the two units on his left wing, the Sciritae and Brasidas's men, to move left to intercept the oncoming men. Knowing that a gap would open up after these units moved, Agis ordered two officers, Aristocles and Hipponoidas, to move two companies from the right to fill it in. However, for some reason, the two officers refused to move (they would later be convicted of cowardice in battle and be exiled from Sparta), so the gap remained open. Agis failed to recall his left wing in time, demonstrating the difficulty of giving and executing orders midbattle. The Mantineans were able to crash through the Sciritae and the Arcadians, and at the same time the 1,000 elite Argive troops were able to exploit the gap in the Spartan line. Together they were able to surround and kill numerous Spartan soldiers. Surrounding an enemy to allow attacks on the sides and on the rear of the formation was the ultimate goal of *hoplite* commanders, not only because of the casualties an army could inflict on an encircled enemy but also because the fear of being encircled sometimes provoked panic and flight even before an encirclement was complete. The Mantineans and their allies were able to push other Spartans back to their camp and kill other, older soldiers on guard there (it was standard to leave lower quality troops in rear positions). The Spartan left had crumbled, bringing the allies victory on this end of the battlefield.

However, the allied right had made a crucial error, missing a great opportunity to change direction by wheeling east to try and take the Spartan center and right from the sides and from behind while it engaged with the allied left. Instead, the allied right took itself out of the battle by continuing its pursuit of the already defeated Spartan left. This was a mistake many armies made.

Meanwhile, the Spartan center, led by King Agis himself and his 300 bodyguards, and the right, made up of Arcadians, Maenalians, Tegeans, and Spartans, were advancing to the sound of the flutes against the allied left. Many of the older Argives, the Cleonaeans, and the Orneans panicked at the thought of facing the renowned Spartan soldiers and fled even before the Spartans broke from their slow trot and charged into their ranks. In their terror and in their haste to escape, they even trampled their own men. At first, the 1,000 Athenian *hoplites* on the left, supported by their cavalry, gave ground only slowly. But, when their neighbors to their right bailed out, the Athenians were suddenly stranded and in danger of being surrounded with the Spartan center to their right and the Spartans and Tegeans moving to outflank them on the left. Agis, however, realized that the enemy right remained unbeaten, so he ordered the center and right of the *phalanx* line to disengage and then wheel west to attack the victorious Mantineans, the Arcadians, and the elite Argive unit. This movement demonstrated how important Spartan discipline and organization were to their military success: the army was able to receive the order and, while remaining in formation, change directions to fight a different enemy. The Athenians, who one minute believed they were about to be encircled and destroyed, now watched as the Spartans marched off. Rather than take this opportunity to regroup and attack, they decided instead to use this unexpected stroke of great fortune to withdraw from the

battle. In *hoplite* battles, emotion played a huge role: logically, here was an opportunity for the Athenians to regain the momentum of the battle, but though their *phalanx* had not been broken and though they had not panicked, their close call, brought on by the pressure of the attack and the threat of encirclement and imminent death, overrode any thought of a renewed assault on the Spartans. Retreat was the only viable option for the demoralized Athenians.

The victorious allied right, now seeing their left defeated and the Spartans marching toward them to attack, now also panicked and fled. Many of the Mantineans were killed, though the elite Argive soldiers escaped.

After the battle, the Spartans set up a trophy to commemorate their victory, something traditionally done by a victorious Greek army. The Spartans then buried their own dead and, after agreeing to truce, allowed the defeated to recover their dead. These too were traditional practices. Altogether, the Spartans lost around 300 men, 3 percent of their army. On the other side, 1,100 men were killed, nearly 14 percent of the *hoplites* in the army.

THE ARMY OF DEMOCRATIC ATHENS

The changes that revolutionized Greek warfare directly affected the structure of Greek government and, even far beyond that, still affect us today. This is true for a number of reasons. First, throughout Greek history there was usually a direct connection between military service and political power. Those who served in the army were usually the ones making political decisions. This was seen in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Since it was the *basileis* like Odysseus who had a near monopoly on the means of war, they possessed the armed might to run their territories. Second, when bronze was the sole metal used for military equipment, there were relatively few soldiers in each state because bronze was so expensive. Armies were limited in size to a few hundred noble warriors. Third, the dramatic changes made by the Archaic Age led to greater trade and therefore cheaper bronze, and, fourth, the introduction of the cheaper metal iron with which to make weapons meant, fifth, a new *hoplite* panoply and, sixth, the new *phalanx* warfare. Seventh, this, combined with the dramatic rise in the population, and, eighth, the rise in wealth of the population led to, ninth, armies that now numbered in the thousands rather than the hundreds.

As time went on, the percentage of aristocratic soldiers in any given army dropped dramatically; most of the men would be from the *hoplite* class, not extremely wealthy but with the means to acquire the new armor and weapons. Increasingly, the security of the state was owed directly to these new *hoplite* soldiers, who protected the city from similar *hoplite* armies. As their importance increased, their lack of political, legal, and social power and rights must have become increasingly clear. They may have become increasingly bitter at their second-class status. Fighting alongside noble warriors and contributing in a similar or even greater fashion to the city's security must have exacerbated these feelings.

In every Greek city-state, the rise of this new *hoplite* class helped place power in the hands of the average citizen. For the first time, the *hoplites* would now have the power to protest their status and, more important, the power to actually do something about it. Aristocratic disunity, caused by various competitions among individuals and families vying for power, contributed to the aristocracy's inability to withstand these new pressures brought by the *hoplites*. Since the *hoplites* vastly outnumbered the aristocrats, and since they were armed, it should not be surprising that by the end of the Archaic Age they had received full political rights in every Greek city-state. Therefore, these military developments led directly to the unique type of Greek city-state called the *polis*. By 500 B.C.E., there were more than 1,000 *poleis* in the Greek world, each essentially a tiny, independent country, usually consisting of one major urban center and the surrounding territory. The urban center functioned as the political, economic, social, and religious capital of the entire *polis*. The numerous *poleis* had generally developed similar political systems. By 500 B.C.E., the *polis* was no longer governed by a king or tyrant, nor was it governed by an elected official such as a president or a prime minister. Instead, all *poleis* were governed by an assembly of citizens. These citizens were not controlled by other men, such as a hereditary monarch, nor were laws handed down by some sort of absolute ruler like a pharaoh. Instead, the assembly made all major decisions concerning the *polis*, including the passage of all legislation, the decision to make war, and any other potential public matter. Generally, citizens had the right to attend this assembly, they had the right to make proposals to their fellow citizens in the assembly, they had the right to join the debate over any issue, and, most important, they had the right to vote to decide on any issue.

When the *polis* had fully evolved by the end of the Archaic Age, there were strict limitations on who was a citizen and who enjoyed political rights. First, though there were female citizens, they did not enjoy political rights. Women would never receive the vote, and there was never any suffragist movement in the Greek world. Second, usually only men who had two citizen parents and who could trace their ancestry back to a certain point in the *polis*'s history had political rights. Therefore, what the Greeks called *aliens*, people who had moved into a *polis* from outside the *polis* either from another Greek state or from outside Greece, could not participate politically. Usually, it did not matter how long you lived in your new home; you would never gain political rights; this was true of your children, your grandchildren, and your further descendents, as well. Third, slaves could not participate politically. The Greeks subjugated their fellow Greeks, as well as foreigners. Slavery was also an accepted fact of life, and there was never any abolitionist movement in the ancient Greek world.

By 500, two types of *poleis* developed: oligarchy and democracy. Oligarchy means "rule by the few" and was far more common. In an oligarchy, political rights were restricted further. Poor male citizens were not allowed to participate, since they could not afford the necessary equipment to serve in the army. Only male citizens who were members of the *hoplite* class because

they possessed sufficient wealth to serve in the army were allowed to participate politically. It is estimated that in an oligarchy, men in the *hoplite* class represented roughly 10 percent of the population. Democracy, which was far rarer, means “rule by the many.” In a democracy, all male citizens, regardless of wealth, could participate. Even this system was not all that democratic, as only about 20 percent of the population could participate. In a democratic *polis* political power was usually still tied to military service. Those too poor to afford to serve in the army rowed the boats in the navy.

Athens was the most famous democratic *polis*. In 508, after winning an internal struggle for power, an Athenian politician named Cleisthenes, with the support of the Athenian people, created a new Athenian army and a new democratic Athenian government. Cleisthenes reorganized the Athenian military, creating, for maybe the first time ever, an army drawn from all of Attica (the country of Athens). Before 508, there seems to have been only a citizen militia that had no organization to speak of and that was called into action only in emergencies. Even then, the armies that we hear about are relatively small and consisted, apparently, of only a tiny fraction of all the men of Attica. After 508, military recruitment would be based on 10 artificial tribes that Cleisthenes created. Each tribe was required to contribute a *taxis* (regiment) to the Athenian army. Each tribe was composed of three distinct regions: one from the city, one from the coast, and one from inland. Therefore, soldiers from all over Attica would be mixed together in their new tribes to create a unified, pan-Athenian army. For the first time, all the potential manpower of Attica would be harnessed, and a large, powerful new army was created. Athens had little military success before 508; now, thanks to these reforms, it possessed maybe the largest army in Greece. Cleisthenes reorganized the command structure, creating a new board of 10 *strategoi* (generals and admirals), one from each of the 10 Athenian tribes. Generals were to be elected to their positions for one year, and they could be reelected as often as the people wished. Military leadership therefore became more professional, as the people tended to choose leaders with proven ability and previous experience. The office of general would eventually become the most prestigious in Athens.

In return for military service, citizens were rewarded with new political powers. Cleisthenes created a new, more powerful assembly in which all male citizens were allowed to participate; the new assembly would meet on a regular basis, 40 times each year and in times of crisis. A new meeting place for the assembly was created on the Pnyx Hill in Athens. He also created a new *boule*, or council of 500, for which all male citizens were eligible.

The Battle of Marathon, 490

The new Athenian army quickly proved its worth. In 506, Athens won two great victories over two separate invading armies of Thebans and Chalcidians. However, though this was impressive, no battle better represented the newfound military strength of the Greek *polis*, especially the Athenian *polis*,

than the Battle of Marathon, fought against Persia. In 490, the Persian king Darius I (r. 521–486 B.C.E.) sent an army of 20,000 men across the Aegean to punish Athens for aiding the Ionian Greeks in their revolt (499–494) against Persia. The Persians landed just outside the city of Marathon, 26 miles north-east of the city of Athens. From Marathon, the Persians sent a message to the Athenians telling them that resistance was futile and to surrender and become Persian subjects. Hippias, the exiled dictator of Athens, who had been driven out in 510, accompanied the Persian forces, and the Athenians realized that if they did surrender, the tyranny would be restored and Hippias would rule Athens as a vassal of Persia. The democracy, which was still only 18 years old, would come to an end. This was a huge decision, and, as in all *poleis*, the decision was not going to be made by a king or an elected leader. Instead, the decision would be made by an assembly of Athenian citizens. The Athenians therefore gathered together on the Pnyx Hill to decide whether to fight or to surrender. The Athenian citizens decided to fight and sent a message back to the Persians: “We know your power is much greater than ours, but such is our love of *eleutheria* [freedom] that we will fight.”¹⁵

As in all *poleis*, the people who voted to go to war were usually the same people who would have to fight. In Athens, citizens voted for war and then literally went home, grabbed their armor, and marched out to face the Persians. This gave the Athenians a huge advantage in morale, given that they were not fighting to defend the power and wealth of others but instead were fighting to defend their own homes and their own political power. The Athenians did try to get help from other Greek *poleis*, but the other *poleis* were afraid to confront the Persians. The Spartans said that they would love to help, but they were in the midst of a religious festival and would be delayed. The only state that sent any aid to Athens was the tiny *polis* of Plataea. The people of Plataea sent a thousand *hoplites* to join 9,000 Athenians. Altogether, the Athenians and the Plateans were outnumbered two to one.

However, at the Battle of Marathon, in a huge upset, the Athenians and Plateans defeated the Persians. Almost 7,000 Persian soldiers were killed, and the rest hopped back on their boats and fled back to Persia.¹⁶ The Athenians lost 192 men.¹⁷ This kind of huge difference in battle casualties was not unusual because it was usually only when one side broke and fled that the casualties mounted. There were a number of reasons why the Greeks were victorious. An Athenian would have said that free men always beat slaves and, since the Athenians were free men and the Persians were all slaves of the king, it was inevitable that the Athenians would emerge victorious. There were a few more likely causes. First of all, the Athenians had the home field advantage; they were fighting on their own territory to defend their land, their families, their wealth, and their political power. Most of all, the battle highlighted the vital link between military service and political power in Greek *poleis* in general and in Athens in particular. Thanks to the reforms of Cleisthenes, all male citizens exercised that political power and were highly motivated to protect that political power. The opposite was true of the Persians. Most of the soldiers in the Persian army were, of course, not Persian but

instead were subject peoples forced by the king to march hundreds of miles to fight a people with whom they had no real grievance. These soldiers were certainly not going to fight to the death on behalf of Persia and fled from the battle when things began to go bad. Another reason for the Athenian victory was the fact that the Athenians used *hoplite* armor, but the Persians did not. The Persians went into battle wearing little more than t-shirts and felt caps and carrying wicker shields. This put them at a huge disadvantage against the heavily armed Greeks, and, in fact, *hoplite* armor would give the Greeks a military edge in every battle they fought with the Persians from 490 B.C.E. down to the time of Alexander the Great.

“RETURN, WITH YOUR SHIELD OR ON IT”: THE UNIQUE MILITARY SYSTEM OF SPARTA

Sparta was an oligarchy that developed around 650, governed by an assembly of *hoplite* citizens over the age of 30. Like other *poleis*, Sparta had a council, called the *Gerousia*, consisting of 28 men over the age of 60 elected to their position for life. There were also five elected ephors, age 30 or over, who among other things administered Sparta's unique social system, and the *Kryteia*, Sparta's secret police. Sparta also had something unique in history: a dual monarchy, with two kings descended from two distinct royal families, the Agiads and the Eurypontids. The kings did not exercise absolute power but were allowed to sit in the *Gerousia* as permanent members. The kings also led the army into battle.

The Spartan social system was geared toward producing the best soldier and therefore the best army possible.¹⁸ Historically, the development of the system dates back to three wars fought by Sparta early in the Archaic Age. The first led to the conquest of the territory of Laconia, in the southeastern Peloponnesus. The people of Laconia were incorporated into the Spartan state as *perioikoi* (“dwellers-around”); they were subjects without political rights. The next two conflicts were the First (740–720) and Second (660) Messenian Wars, fought against Messenia, a region in the southwestern Peloponnesus. In these two wars, the Spartans conquered Messenia, bringing nearly 3,000 square miles of southern Greece under their control and making Sparta the biggest Greek city-state. The Messinians were enslaved and became known as *helots* with no political rights. It is estimated that the *helots* made up 75 percent of the total population of Sparta and that Spartan male citizens numbered less than 10 percent. Because the Spartans had so many subjects and slaves with no political rights, they were nervous that these people might rise up in rebellion. Therefore, to protect themselves and to protect their power, they developed their system.

The system began at birth; all male babies were inspected by state officials and if they were not strong and healthy they were exposed. At the age of seven, Spartan boys would be taken from their families to live in barracks with other children of similar age. There they would receive a minimal education and, more important, military training. This training included various

tests of endurance, constant exposure to the elements, almost inedible food, one rough mat to sleep on per year, and brutal discipline. All of this and more was to toughen up the future Spartan soldier to ensure that when he joined the Spartan army, he could successfully overcome any hardship. At the age of 20, each Spartan boy had to be accepted into one of the many “mess” groups or dining clubs. There was only one chance; if a Spartan was rejected, due to various inadequacies that had been exposed during his 13 years of training, he became an outcast, and he could never become a Spartan citizen. Those who were accepted lived and ate with their mess mates from age 20 to age 30. They could then begin to grow their hair long and to grow a beard without a mustache, both of which were symbols of the Spartan soldier. They could marry during this time, but they were not allowed to live with their spouse, and their conjugal visits were strictly regulated. If all went well, at the age of 30, a Spartan became a *homoioi* (an “equal”), meaning a full citizen with political rights, and he would now be able to live with his wife in their own home on land assigned by the state, which was roughly equal to that of his fellow Spartan soldiers. Spartan soldiers would be assigned *helots* who would work their land, leaving them plenty of time to train for war. They would be liable for service until they were 60, and even after that they could be recalled in times of emergency.

Sparta’s social and military system was unique in history and provided one of the first examples of a totalitarian state. The government controlled most important aspects of its citizens’ lives, telling them which babies to keep, taking boys from their families at a young age, telling citizens if and when to get married, restricting visits between husband and wife, and dictating the time when they could actually live together. Even minor matters such as hair length were regulated by the state. This type of government interference in the personal lives of its citizens was unheard of Greece. However, militarily, it worked in a number of ways. Sparta never lost a major land battle from the Archaic Age until the great defeat at Leuctra in 371. Alone among the Greeks, the Spartans felt it unnecessary to build walls around their city; their superlative army kept enemies far away. Other Greeks knew the training regimen the Spartans endured, so the mere sight of Spartan soldiers, with the *lambdas*¹⁹ on their shields and wearing their dark red cloaks, so colored to hide the bloodstains if they were wounded, was sometimes enough to terrify an enemy army into a precipitous flight. Sparta was also able to prevent any major uprisings by the *helots* until the aforementioned defeat at Leuctra. Ironically, though the Spartans had created the greatest army in Greece, if not in size then in quality, they were often afraid to use it. Their biggest fear was a *helot* rebellion, and if they marched great distances from home to fight a battle, the army’s absence might encourage an uprising back home. Also, if somehow they suffered a defeat in battle, that too would encourage an uprising. Therefore, the Spartans were often reluctant to engage in any far-flung military enterprises.

Four

The Great Wars of Classical Greece, 499–362 B.C.E.

THE PERSIAN WAR, 480–479

After failing at Marathon in 490, the Persians tried again 10 years later. In 480, Xerxes (r. 486–465), Darius's successor, gathered together an army of 200,000 men, the biggest in history. He assembled a navy of 600 *triremes*, the largest navy yet seen in history. He began marching from Ionia in the summer of 480. The army marched north, then west, and then south, coming down into central Greece from the north. The fleet followed along, hugging the coast.

The Greeks knew Xerxes was coming as it was impossible to hide a force of such size. The Greeks actually sent out spies to gather information, but they were captured by Xerxes. They were not killed; instead, the king gave them a free tour of the Persian camp so that they could see the incredible military force now heading toward Greece. Xerxes hoped that their report would convince the Greeks simply to surrender, rather than resist. However, some Greek *poleis* decided to fight anyway. Specifically, 31 Greek city-states joined together and formed a military alliance called the Hellenic League.¹ This league included some of the most powerful states in Greece, including Sparta, the strongest land power, and Athens, which by 480 was the strongest naval power. Altogether the Hellenic League mustered 40,000 *hoplites* and 400 *triremes*. The Hellenic League represented one of the few times in Greek history when Greek *poleis* actually put aside their differences and joined together for a common cause. Unfortunately, the picture is not entirely rosy, as some Greek states willingly joined with Persia.

The “Hot Gates”: Thermopylae, 480

Thermopylae, or the “Hot Gates,”² guards the only passable rout from Thessaly and northern Greece into central Greece and the road to Athens and the Isthmus of Corinth. The pass runs west to east and is fenced in on one side by mountains to the south and by the Malian Gulf to the north. The Greeks decided that the pass provided their best opportunity to stop

the Persian advance. The narrow plain was barely 50 yards wide in some places, and the mountains and the sea would guard the Greeks' flanks, allowing them to fight with an unbroken line facing their enemies. Even though they would be vastly outnumbered, the enemy would not be able to make use of its numerical superiority to surround them in this narrow, confined space.

In the middle of August, Xerxes moved down from the north into Malis, camping at the town of Trachis, directly west of Thermopylae. The Greeks had already taken up their positions at the "Hot Gates" and had rebuilt a wall to block the pass. They numbered nearly 7,000, including contingents from Tegea, Mantinea, Orchomenus, Arcadia, Corinth, Phlius, Mycenae, Boeotia, Locria, Phocis, and Opus. The force was spearheaded by 300 elite Spartan *hoplites*, all fathers of living sons to ensure each family would survive a military disaster. They were led by King Leonidas (r. 491–480), who was also in overall command of the Greek army.

Xerxes, learning of the Greeks encamped just ahead, sent out a cavalryman to reconnoiter. The scout came upon some of the Spartans stationed outside the wall; they were exercising or were combing their long hair. Xerxes, already surprised that the Greeks had not fled at the approach of his army, was still more bewildered by the reported behavior of the Spartans. But he was informed by a Spartan exile in his own army not to underestimate his opponents, that the Spartans were now preparing to fight because:

it is common practice for the Spartans to pay close attention to their hair when they are about to risk their lives . . . you will now have to fight the bravest men in all Hellas [Greece].³

For four days, the Persians did not move. Finally, when Xerxes realized that the Greeks were not going to evacuate, and when he had been unable to find another way around, he decided to launch a frontal assault. On the fifth day, he ordered in his Median and Cissian units. The fighting lasted "all day," according to Herodotus, but, despite overwhelming numbers, the Persian contingents could not break through. Xerxes recalled them and instead sent his elite unit, the 10,000 Immortals led by Hydarnes. The best soldiers in the Persian army fared no better. The Spartans proved that their physical and military training and, of course, their fabled discipline under fire were superior to those even of the best of their enemies. One effective tactic that they used repeatedly was a fake retreat that would cause Persians to break ranks and pursue, at which point the Spartans would wheel around and inflict heavy casualties. Only an incredibly disciplined army could pull this off in the face of an enemy attack and not allow itself to truly fall apart once it had broken ranks. Undeterred, Xerxes, who had watched the day's fighting from a throne set up a short distance away, decided to try again. On the sixth day, the battle raged, but the Greek units, rotating in and out of the front line, held and inflicted numerous casualties on their enemies.

A number of the same factors present at Marathon 10 years before still worked in the Greeks' favor. They enjoyed the home field advantage, and

most of the soldiers in the Persian army, except for units like the Immortals, were not Persians but instead were subject peoples forced to march great distances to fight for the Persian king, whom they may have hated more than the Greeks they were attacking. Also, the Greeks still had huge advantages in equipment: they used *hoplite* armor, while the Persians did not, and the Greek spears were much longer than the javelins used by the Persians, giving them a significant reach advantage. Last, the terrain favored the less numerous but more heavily armed Greeks by forcing Xerxes to make a frontal assault in a narrow pass.

Xerxes was now at a complete loss; retreat would be an unacceptable blow to his pride and a threat to the very security of his throne, yet his troops were now afraid to attack the Greeks. Luckily for Xerxes, his problem was solved by a Greek traitor named Ephialtes. Ephialtes was from the area and, in the hope of earning a considerable reward, explained to Xerxes that there was in fact a small track that circled around Thermopylae and terminated at Alpenos, just to the east of the pass. Xerxes immediately ordered Hydarnes and the Immortals to make their way along the track after sunset and to come down behind the Spartans the next morning. The Greeks realized that they had been betrayed; Leonidas sent away most of his army to the south. He and his 300 Spartans remained in the pass in an effort to stall the Persians and allow the rest to escape and also to fulfill a prophecy that the war could not be won until Sparta lost a king. That morning, before the battle, two of the more famous Spartan quotes were uttered. Leonidas urged his men “to eat a hearty breakfast for tonight they would dine in Hades.” And, when another Spartan named Dieneces was told that there would be so many Persian archers that their arrows would block out the sun, he replied: “Good, then we will fight in the shade!”⁴

The 300 Spartans and their king were trapped by the Immortals to their east and the rest of the Persian army to the west. The final battle illustrates the brutality of ancient war. Many Persians were drowned in the gulf or were trampled by their own men. The Spartans, fighting with “fury and desperation,” were eventually forced to use their swords since their spears had been broken, and “when they no longer had swords they fought with their hands and teeth.”⁵

King Leonidas was killed, and a furious struggle erupted over possession of his body. The Spartans eventually retrieved it but finally were overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of their enemy. Despite numerous casualties, the Persians, on the third day of fighting, had won the battle and now had an open road to Athens.

A stone lion was later erected at Thermopylae to honor Leonidas and the fallen Greeks. The epitaph reads:

Go tell the Spartans, passerby,
that here, obedient to their orders, we lie⁶

Today, though the terrain has changed and the pass has been widened by silt from nearby rivers, a modern statue of Leonidas has been erected,

carrying a shield and a spear, still facing west, still guarding the pass of Thermopylae.

Triremes and Quinqueremes: Naval Warfare in the Ancient Mediterranean

The next crucial battle of the war would be fought on the sea. In the ancient world, the standard naval vessel was the *trireme*. It had developed sometime during the 500s B.C.E., possibly in Phoenicia or Egypt or maybe even in the *polis* of Corinth in Greece. The *trireme* was essentially a long, skinny rowboat made almost entirely of wood. Only the front of the boat, called the beak, was made of bronze or iron. The *trireme* was about 120 feet long and about 20 feet wide in the middle, though far narrower at the front and back. There were about 200 men on board the *trireme*, including the captain, marines, navigators, archers, and a helmsman. Most of the men (about 180 altogether) rowed the ship. Generally, rowers were slaves or condemned criminals who were chained to the oars and who, if the boat was sunk, went down with it. Only in Greece did free citizens row the *triremes*, and, because they were not chained to the oars, they were often able to swim to safety even when their ships sank. Rowers sat on three different levels (hence the name *trireme*), each with an oar of varying length. The modern Greek navy built a *trireme* called the *Olympias*, which first sailed in 1988. It proved to be very maneuverable and faster than expected, doing better than nine knots. Naval tactics were generally very simple: build up enough speed and then ram the beak of the *trireme* into the enemy vessel, causing it to sink. One hoped that the ship did not break apart on impact or become stuck in the enemy *trireme*. Whichever fleet sunk most of the enemy ships would usually emerge victorious. Over time, tactics would become slightly more sophisticated. For example, boarding and capturing an enemy vessel later became important.

Every ancient state used some variation of the *trireme*, though beginning in the late fourth century B.C.E. larger vessels were constructed. According to tradition, Dionysius I, tyrant of the Sicilian city of Syracuse (430–367), invented the *quinquereme*, which was later adopted by other Greek states, the Hellenistic kingdoms, Carthage, and Rome. The *quinquereme* was a larger version of the earlier *trireme*. Though roughly the same length as the *trireme*, the *quinquereme* was wider to accommodate the increased number of rowers on board; whereas the *trireme* had three banks or levels on which sat one rower with one oar, the *quinquereme* apparently had three banks with five rowers, two on the top level with one oar, two on the middle level with one oar, and one on the bottom level. The smaller, lighter *trireme* had great difficulty ramming the heavier, stronger *quinquereme*. The *quinquereme* offered another advantage; being wider than previous vessels, it provided for the greater use of marines and therefore more opportunity for boarding. Altogether, the *quinqueremes* had a complement of about 300 men, roughly 100 more than the *trireme*. Normally, 40 of the men on deck would be marines

ready to fire various projectiles against enemy ships, often as a prelude to boarding. Though the *trireme* did not completely disappear, the *quinquereme* became the main vessel of naval warfare. Larger boats appeared during this period, most notably in the Hellenistic east, where “tens,” “twenties,” and “forties” were supposedly built. King Ptolemy II of Egypt (r. 282–246) had a ship named the *Lady of Alexandria*, which had 20 banks of rowers; he was outdone though by his grandson Ptolemy IV (r. 221–204), who built a 40-banked vessel more than 400 feet long. If true, this would rival the great ships built during the reign of the Yung-lo emperor of China (r. 1402–1424 C.E.) as the largest wooden vessels in history. Unfortunately, the Ptolemaic ships were so big they could barely sail, and in fact Mediterranean peoples were unable to build vessels bigger than a *quinquereme* that could be used effectively in combat. Despite the growth in the size of naval vessels, however, the overall nature of naval warfare remained almost unchanged throughout antiquity.

The First Great Naval Battle of Antiquity: Salamis, 480

Though Leonidas and his men had made a valiant stand at Thermopylae, the Persians had still managed to break through, and there was now nothing standing in the way of their march into central Greece. The populations of loyal Greek city-states were evacuated south to the Peloponnesus along with the Greek army. Xerxes and the Persians marched into Athens and took the city without a fight. Xerxes then destroyed it as revenge for Marathon. The Persian army was now stationed at Athens, and the Persian fleet was beached south of the city at Phalaron. The only Greeks nearby were the Greeks of the navy, which was now stationed at the island of Salamis, just across a narrow channel from the mainland. Xerxes wanted to win a decisive victory immediately, so, on September 20, 480 B.C.E., he set up his throne on a hill overlooking the sea so that he could watch the battle unfold. He then ordered his ships into Salamis Channel to attack the Greeks; more than 1,000 *triremes* now came to grips. A Greek eyewitness described the beginning of the battle:

There rose and rang from the Hellenic host a roar of voices musical with hymns . . . the Hellenes [Greeks] resolutely went into battle . . . “Forth sons of Hellas [Greece]; free your land and free your children and your wives, free the seats of your gods and the tombs of your fathers.”⁷

In the Battle of Salamis, in another huge upset, the Greeks were victorious. Their heavier, stronger *triremes* wiped out most of the faster but lighter Persian ships in the narrow channel. Even though the Greeks lost a large number of ships, as well, because their rowers were free citizens, even when a ship sank they could often swim to safety. This battle was important not only because the Persian fleet was destroyed but also because Xerxes panicked after the battle. He knew that to return home at some point he had to cross water, and he now no longer had a navy to protect that crossing. He

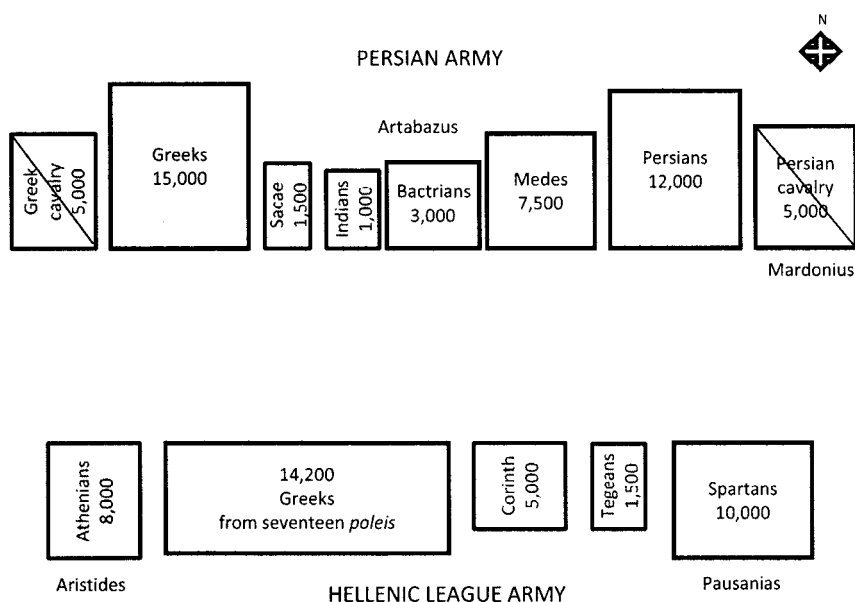
feared that he might now be trapped in Greece. So he took most of his army and immediately fled back to Persia; the Greeks were more than happy to let him go. Xerxes did leave behind a very large army of more than 50,000 men, but suddenly the odds had become a lot better for the Greeks. Before they had been outnumbered maybe five to one; now they were outnumbered less than two to one.

For the Freedom of *Hellas*: The Battle of Plataea, 479

The final battle of the Persian War took place at Plataea in 479. The Persian forces were led by Mardonius and numbered some 40,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. The Hellenic army, led by the Spartan Pausanias, uncle and regent of the young king Pleistarchus, numbered, according to Herodotus, 38,700 infantry, the biggest Greek army that had ever been put into the field. The battle would take place in the plain just west of the city of Plataea, north of the Cithaeron mountain range and just south of the Asopus River. In August 479, Mardonius moved his army into Boeotia. Pausanias and the Hellenic army marched north from the Isthmus of Corinth, stopped briefly in Attica to pick up 8,000 Athenian *hoplites*, and swore the famous Oath of Plataea before crossing over into Boeotian territory.

The two armies then faced each other across the Asopus River, Persians to the north and Greeks to the south (see Figure 4.1). The Persian infantry included (from left to right): 12,000 Persians, 7,500 Medes, 3,000 Bactrians,

Figure 4.1
Battle of Plataea, 479



1,000 Indians, 1,500 Sacae, and 15,000 Greeks from Thebes and other *poleis*. On the left wing was a contingent of 5,000 Persian cavalry, which included 1,000 men of Mardonius's elite bodyguard; on the right wing were 5,000 Greek cavalrymen. On the Greek side (from right to left) were 10,000 Spartans, 1,500 Tegeans, 5,000 *hoplites* from Corinth, and various smaller units of Greek soldiers from no fewer than 17 *poleis*, including Megara, Plataea, and Sicyon, among others, numbering more than 14,000 men. Holding the left wing were the 8,000 Athenian *hoplites* led by Aristides.

When the two armies deployed on the plain, they did not immediately attack. Both sides had strong positions and were unwilling to move forward. For a week, no battle was fought. Around August 1, 479, Pausanias, running short of food and water, decided to move south, back toward the mountains, to a more secure source of supplies. He also hoped to lure the Persians forward onto less favorable ground. He ordered his soldiers in the center to make a night withdrawal and to reform a line reaching out directly west from the city of Plataea. At dawn, the Athenian and Spartan contingents were to follow conspicuously enough to convince Mardonius that this orderly retreat was in fact an effort by the Greeks to escape from the battlefield. Mardonius, who was also running low on badly needed supplies, immediately ordered his men forward. Mounted on his white horse and surrounded by his bodyguards, he led the charge of the left of the Persian cavalry and infantry at the double. The right also advanced, spearheaded by the Medizing Greek (the Greeks who had joined Persia) infantry and cavalry. The Persian center did not move as quickly, held up by the more difficult terrain it had to cross and possibly by the unwillingness of its commander, Artabazus, to press home an attack he had argued against in council and did not believe would succeed. On the right of the Greek line, the Spartans were hard pressed by the Persian archers, who were behind a barrier of wicker shields while they fired away at the Spartans. Arrows landed in the Spartan ranks, killing and wounding many. Meanwhile, Pausanias was busy with another very important duty of any Greek general: taking the auspices to ensure that the omens were favorable. Pausanias called upon Hera, with tears in his eyes, begging her for aid to bring the Greeks victory; it seems that at some point his prayers were answered, the sacrifices proved favorable, and the priests now predicted victory. He finally ordered the Spartans to move forward to force the Persians to fight hand to hand and to halt their aerial attack. Finally, the two lines engaged. According to Plutarch (46–120 C.E.), in his *Life of Aristides*, the struggle was fierce:

the Spartans, keeping their shields locked edge to edge as they advanced, threw themselves upon the enemy, wrenched away their wicker shields, and then thrust with their long spears at the faces and breasts of the Persians and slaughtered them in great numbers. In spite of this the Persians fought bravely and skillfully . . . they seized the long spears of the Greeks with their bare hands, snapped many of them off, and then closed in to fierce hand-to-hand fighting, using their daggers and scimitars, tearing away their enemies' shields and grappling with them.⁸

The night and early morning movements of the Greek army had achieved their goal in enticing the Persians to attack, but as yet they had been unable

to reform a line facing the enemy. The Spartans on the right and the Athenians on the left were some distance apart; Pausanias sent an urgent message to Aristides begging him to move west to close the gap, but the Athenians were also having difficulties on the left facing the Medizing Greek cavalry and infantry, and especially their ancient enemies the Thebans. Therefore, the Athenians were unable to fulfill Pausanias's request, since they could not withdraw from the fighting in which they were already involved.

However, the Greek center, which had moved south during the night, now made a sudden and very important reappearance. Some of the units led by the Megarians and Plataeans moved in to help the Athenians, attacking the Medizing Greeks. At the same time, the Corinthians, 5,000 strong, were able to move east from the vicinity of Plataea and plug the gap between the Athenians and the Spartans, convincing the already hesitant Artabazus to remain north of the battle.

With this aid and with their flanks now secure, the Spartan and Athenian wings were finally able to turn the tide of battle. The Spartans were able to slowly push the Persians back. As often happened, one moment or incident, after a prolonged period of fighting, could turn the tide of the entire battle. The key to the Persian army was its commander, Mardonius. He had led the charge of the Persian left against the Spartan right and was clearly visible to his troops on his white horse, supported by his 1,000 elite cavalry bodyguards. Wherever Mardonius was, the Persians, despite their mounting losses, continued to fight bravely and to make constant attacks on the Spartan lines. But the Spartan line could not be broken, and finally the crucial moment occurred: Mardonius was killed, his head crushed by a stone thrown by a Spartan named Arimnestus. Once Mardonius was dead and most of his bodyguard lay dead around him, the Persian left collapsed. They panicked and immediately began to flee north, back toward their camp. News of the left wing's defeat quickly passed along the Persian line. Artabazus, in the center, who had apparently still not engaged the enemy and had a clear view of what was happening to his south and east, now decided to abandon the battlefield altogether; he quickly led his troops west toward Phocis. The Greek center attempted to give chase but was unable to halt the Persian withdrawal. Artabazus brought his troops safely from Greece, not mentioning on his way out the defeat the Persians had suffered. The Medizing Greeks on the right, now realizing that all was lost, also retreated to their various homes. The Athenians moved forward and, along with the Spartans, besieged the Persian camp. After suffering heavy casualties, they broke through part of the stockade and butchered 7,000 Persian soldiers. Mardonius and 10,000 of his soldiers, mostly Persians, not foreign auxiliaries, lay dead on the field of Plataea. More important, the great invading army brought by Xerxes in 480 was no more; those Persian soldiers who survived the battle were now on the run with all possible speed back to Persia. The Greek casualty numbers, as at Marathon and Salamis, were relatively low. According to Plutarch, 1,360 Greeks died at Plataea.

The Battle of Plataea was one of the decisive battles in history. The Persians were driven from Greece, and, though the Greeks did not know it at the time,

they would never return. This meant Greece would continue to develop a unique civilization independent of Persian control. The Greeks, of course, had always believed that the *polis* was the greatest political and military system ever invented, and now their great victory provided them proof that this was true. It is no coincidence that the year 479 marked the end of the Persian invasion of Greece and also the beginning of the Golden or Classical Age of Greece. The Greeks had defeated the greatest empire in history, so they now became convinced that they could accomplish anything, that literally anything was possible. Their victory would inspire the great achievements of the Golden or Classical Age: the art, the architecture, the plays, the histories, and the philosophy. Had the Persians won, none of this would have happened, or, at the very least, it would have happened in a completely different way. We might never have heard of democracy had the Persians crushed it at Marathon, Salamis, or Plataea.

THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR, 431–404

Unfortunately, Greek unity did not last. By 431, the Greek world was divided into two hostile groups; on one side Athens, its allies, and the subjects of the Athenian Empire, on the other Sparta and its allies. Exacerbating the divide were the dramatic political differences between the two. Athens represented democracy, whereas Sparta and its allies represented oligarchy. The Spartans and their allies were concerned that if Athenian power continued to grow, they might lose their independence and, worst of all, they might be required to accept a democratic government and be forced to share power with their poorer fellow citizens. This was unacceptable, as the Athenian historian Thucydides noted: “The Spartans were afraid of the further growth of Athenian power, seeing that already the greater part of Hellas was already under Athenian control.”⁹

A series of crises during the 430s brought matters to a head, and negotiations failed to resolve the trouble. The Athenians refused to see the last Spartan envoy, Melisippus, and escorted him out of Attica. When he crossed over the frontier, he spoke prophetic words: “This day will be the beginning of great sorrows for Hellas.”¹⁰

Just outside the city of Plataea was the battlefield on which the decisive Greek victory over the Persians in 479 had been won. Plataea represented the unity of at least some Greeks who had (for once) put aside their various differences and had joined together for a common cause. Every year the *Eleutheria* (“Freedom”) Festival took place at Plataea, and every fourth year athletic games were held. These remembrances of the great victory would continue for more than 500 years. A ceremony would be held on the battlefield in which a bull was sacrificed and libations of wine and milk were made as part of prayers to Zeus and the other gods who had helped make the great victory possible. The gravestones of the men who had died at Plataea would be cleaned and a toast would be made: “Drink to the men who died for the freedom of Greece.”

Ironically, it was at Plataea that the Peloponnesian War began, near the very spot where, 48 years before, a coalition of Greek states had successfully defended its freedom against the greatest empire on earth. Now Greece embarked on the most destructive war in its history.

Sparta was the head of the Peloponnesian League and allied to numerous other states around the Greek world. Athens had its empire and its few remaining free allies, including Lesbos, Chios, Thessaly, Corcyra, and Plataea. Altogether, Sparta and its allies had maybe as many as 50,000 *hoplites*. The Athenians had 13,000 *hoplites* (men between 20 and 45 years of age) in addition to reserve units, which were made up of older and younger men and consisted of another 16,000 soldiers. These last soldiers, though, were not considered fit to go into open battle and were generally used for garrison duty or for guarding the walls of Athens. In addition, the Athenians had 1,200 cavalry. Therefore, the Spartans and their allies had a significant numerical advantage in land forces, and the Spartan soldiers were of course considered the best in Greece.

Not surprisingly, the Spartans wanted to force a decisive infantry battle to bring the war to a speedy and successful conclusion. Their plan therefore was relatively simple: they would invade Attica, ravage the countryside, and force the Athenians to come out and offer battle. If the Athenians refused to fight, the Spartans would destroy all of their produce until eventually the Athenians were forced to surrender. Most Spartans, and most of their allies who had argued for war, believed that the Athenians could not hold out for long before they would be forced to capitulate. According to Thucydides, few Greeks believed Athens could last more than a year. Those few who argued that the war might drag on for years, such as King Archidamus II (r. 469–427) of Sparta, were ignored.

The hard-line policies of Pericles (495–429), Athens' most influential politician, helped bring Athens into the war. Now he had a plan for how the Athenians were going to survive. He knew that the Athenians were outnumbered and outclassed on land, but the Athenians did have huge advantages on the sea. The Athenians had 300 *triremes*, and with those of their free allies such as Corcyra, Chios, and Lesbos the number may have reached 500. Sparta had no ships of its own; its allies had maybe 100 *triremes*. As on land, there was a disparity not just in quantity but also in quality: the Athenian sailors were the best in the Mediterranean.

Therefore, the Athenians would not challenge Sparta in a land battle. Instead, most of the population of Attica, and at least some of their property, would be pulled back inside the Long Walls that connected the city of Athens to the harbor at the Piraeus, five miles away. In essence, Pericles intended to turn the city of Athens into an island, while the Athenian navy would protect Athenian control of the seas; this would allow the Athenians to import all the goods, especially food, they needed to survive. The navy would also maintain control of the empire, ensuring that the tribute necessary to finance their war effort, and especially the expensive navy, would continue to flow into the city. The navy would also be used to carry out offensive missions against the

Peloponnesus and other enemy targets. Pericles' defensive policy of course meant handing over most of Attica to Peloponnesian depredations, so restraining his own countrymen was going to be difficult, yet he hoped Athens could hold out for a few years until the Spartans finally realized that the war was pointless and gave up, in the process acknowledging Athens as an equal and recognizing the legitimacy of the Athenian Empire. Once the Spartans quit, Athens' other enemies would not be able to fight on alone.

Both sides therefore believed they could achieve their strategic goals. However, as often happens in history, so many unforeseen factors intervene once war begins that conflicts rarely unfold as expected. To the great shock of the Greeks, at least to those who were still left alive in 404, it would take 27 years and much destruction and bloodshed before the Peloponnesian War came to an end.

Stalemate: The Peloponnesian War, Part I, 431–421

The war's first decade did not produce the decisive land battle the Peloponnesians were hoping for, nor did their inability to capture Athens convince them to quit. Instead, the war dragged on with plenty of violence and bloodshed but no decisive event. Both sides stuck to their initial plans. The Spartans and their allies remained relatively conservative, ravaging Attica each year, but did little beyond that. During the first five years of the war, the Spartans conducted 12 military operations; half involved attacks on Attica. Their lack of money meant they generally could not carry on extended overseas campaigns unless they could be paid and supplied by on-the-spot plundering. As befitted their greater wealth, the Athenians were more ambitious, launching no fewer than 23 operations during the first five years of the war. The Athenians had this ability because of their greater financial resources, which allowed them to send out multiple armies and fleets to various theaters of war. Their forces carried out naval attacks, amphibious assaults, and traditional *hoplite* battles against allies of Sparta, against Spartan territories, and against their own subjects when necessary. The breadth of these operations was remarkable: Athenian forces were engaged in Italy, Sicily, the islands of the Aegean and Ionian Seas, Thrace and northern Greece, and central Greece and Ionia. Thucydides mentions no fewer than 32 different cities or regions in which the Athenians fought. However, the Athenians could not challenge the Spartans on land, and the Spartans could not wrest control of the seas from Athens or break down its Long Walls. As long as these facts remained unchanged, there could be no decisive victory for either side, since there could be no major, decisive battle of any type between them. The war continued to drag on with mounting losses and costs on both sides.

Peltasts: Light Infantry at Pylos, 425

The decisive encounter of the first part of the war came at Pylos, in southwestern Greece, in 425. An Athenian general named Demosthenes, com-

manding 40 *triremes*, was driven by a storm into the harbor of Pylos. He proceeded to build a small fort on the site of the ancient Mycenaean city. His actions terrified the Spartans, who believed he was attempting to establish a permanent camp in the southwestern Peloponnesus that could be used as a base of operation against Spartan territory and, more important, as a safe haven for Sparta's runaway *helots*. Sparta landed a force of 420 *hoplites* on the tiny island of Spachteria, which guarded the harbor entrance, to keep it from the Athenians. It then launched a disastrous combined land and sea assault on Demosthenes' ships and fort. When that failed, the 420 Spartans on the island of Spachteria were stranded. Though they were able to get some supplies delivered by swimmers who crossed to the island guided by moonlight, they were unable to escape. However, though the Athenian navy blockaded the island, the Athenians were afraid to land and confront the formidable Spartan *hoplites*. With winter approaching, the Athenians feared that the blockade would be almost impossible to maintain.

Back in Athens, the people in the assembly were becoming more and more concerned about the lack of progress. Cleon, an Athenian politician who had risen to prominence after Pericles' death, demanded action from Nicias, Demosthenes, and the other generals in charge. Nicias volunteered to give up his command and allow Cleon to take his place; Cleon was taken by surprise and tried to back out, but the people loved the idea and cried out, "Sail, sail." Realizing he was trapped, Cleon agreed to go and, after securing reinforcements, vowed that he would return victorious within 20 days.¹¹ Altogether, Cleon would have 800 *hoplites*, 800 archers, and 2,000 *peltasts* (troops lightly armed with slings or javelins who moved quickly on the battlefield) at Pylos.

After his arrival at Pylos, Cleon received a very lucky break: a fire burned the trees on Spachteria, depriving the Spartans of potential hiding places and exposing their positions, the terrain, and suitable places to land troops. Cleon and Demosthenes decided on a sneak attack at dawn; the Athenian navy landed on the southeastern and southwestern parts of the island and quickly overwhelmed the 30 Spartans guarding those sectors. The Athenian force then moved north against the main Spartan camp at the center of the island; the Athenians had nearly 4,000 troops, the Spartans fewer than 400. Thucydides reports:

Demosthenes directed some of his men to occupy the highest points of ground with the object of causing the enemy . . . to be surrounded on all sides . . . and exposed to great numbers in every direction and if he attacked those in front he would be shot at from the rear . . . the lightly armed were the hardest to deal with since with their arrows, javelins, stones, and slings they were effective at long range and it was impossible to come close to them . . . since in running away they had the advantage in speed . . . and the Spartans in their heavy armor could not press their pursuit.¹²

Initially the Athenians had been terrified of the Spartans because of their fearsome reputation, but as the Spartan counterattacks faltered, the Athenians gained increasing confidence and began taunting the Spartans as they

attacked. Their attacks also kicked up ash from the recent fires, so the Spartans had difficulty seeing their attackers. The famed discipline of the Spartan soldiers began to break down, Thucydides says they were panicked, unused to this style of fighting and unable to regroup or hear the commands of their officers. No battle during the war more clearly demonstrated the rising importance of *peltasts* and other lightly armed troops. Previously, battles were decided almost exclusively by the *hoplites*; now the *peltasts* played not just an important role but, in battles like Spachteria, a decisive one. The Spartans fought their way to the northern tip of the island, with the Athenians in close pursuit. Meanwhile, a troop of Messenians had made their way up the steep northern cliffs of the island and suddenly appeared in the Spartans' rear. Now completely surrounded, the Spartans surrendered. Of the 420 Spartan soldiers on the island, 128 had been killed, and 292 surrendered. No event caused more shock in the Greek world than the surrender of the Spartans soldiers on Spachteria; with the memory of King Leonidas and his 300 Spartans at Thermopylae still vivid, it was thought that Spartan soldiers would fight to the death rather than endure the indignity of capture. Thucydides, describing the events on the island, said that:

Nothing caused more surprise among the Hellenes [Greeks] than anything else that happened in the war. The general impression had been that Spartans would never surrender their arms due to hunger or any other compulsion; instead they would keep them to the last and die fighting. Some wondered if the ones who had fallen were the real Spartans. One Spartan who had been taken prisoner replied that "arrows would be worth a great deal if they could pick out brave men from the cowards."¹³

The Spartan soldiers were taken to Athens and held as hostages. Since the men represented a significant percentage of the overall Spartan citizen body and since many of the prisoners were related to some of the most important Spartan families, the Spartans were desperate to get them back. The annual invasions of Attica ceased, and the Spartans attempted to negotiate a peace settlement based on a return to the *status quo ante bellum*. Eventually, as Thucydides noted, "Both sides had good reasons for making peace. The Athenians, the Spartans and their allies made a treaty and swore to it, city by city."¹⁴

Though the peace was meant to last 50 years, after all the suffering and bloodshed too little had changed. The Athenian empire still existed, and Sparta had not been broken. Most people in Greece expected war would come again; they would not have long to wait.

War Crimes

In 427, the siege of Plataea, which had sparked the Peloponnesian War in 431, finally came to end after provisions in the city ran low and its defenders agreed to surrender. The Spartans promised that each would receive a fair trial and only the guilty would be punished. Instead, each man was brought

before Spartan judges and was asked one question: “Have you done anything to help the Spartans and their allies during the war?”¹⁵ When inevitably the man answered no, he was led away and executed. Altogether, 200 Plataeans and 25 Athenians were killed; the few women in the city were enslaved.

This was one of the first examples of the incredible rise of violence and bloodshed committed by Greek against Greek that went far beyond the necessities of war and reached levels unheard of in previous conflicts. Almost every Greek state was guilty of these wartime atrocities.¹⁶ Maybe the most famous example of the violence of the war occurred during what was supposed to be a period of peace. In 416, Athens attacked the Aegean island of Melos. The Athenians already controlled almost all the islands in that sea but had never conquered Melos; a previous attack in 425 had failed. Though Melos was small and unimportant and certainly no threat to Athens, and though it had remained neutral during the first part of the war, the decision to attack was based on the theory that Melos’s continued independence was a threat to the Athenians since their subjects may have thought the Athenians were no longer as ruthless and determined as they had been in the past. Inaction with regard to Melos would provide the enemies of Athens with evidence of Athenian weakness.

So, to demonstrate their determination to retain their empire, Athens sent 3,000 *hoplites* and 30 *triremes* against the island. The Athenians first offered the Melians a chance to avoid certain doom if they agreed to become subject to Athens and agreed to pay tribute, but the Melians refused.¹⁷ Though it proved to be more difficult than expected, Melos was captured in the winter of 416–415. What had happened up to this point, of course, was not new in Greek history: states had attacked other states on a regular basis since the Archaic Age. What happened next was new to the period of the Peloponnesian War. The Athenians executed all the men on the island; of course, the use of ancient weapons made this an incredibly bloody business. The women and children were then sold off into slavery. The entire population of the island had now been removed, and Athenians were sent out to take the land. Both the Athenians and Melians were Greeks, sharing a language, culture, and religion; yet that did not stop the Athenians from acting as they did. As was so often the case, the decision to exterminate the male population of the island was not made by a crazy general or berserk soldiers on the island. All major decisions of this nature had to be made by an assembly of citizens back in Athens. These citizens were seemingly under no immediate threat and would therefore be able to make logical decisions free of the fear or panic that might sometimes lead to atrocities in war. Maybe the pressures of the war were having an effect: the Athenians, as noted earlier, feared that if they were overthrown, their former subjects would take their revenge, so any measures necessary to retain their empire by inspiring fear among the Greeks were acceptable. Whatever the case, someone had to have risen in the assembly and proposed that all the men on the island should be put to the sword and everyone else should be sold into slavery. The proposal would then have been debated and eventually

approved by the citizens sitting safely on the Pnyx Hill, the meeting place of the Athenian Assembly.

Another interesting contemporary source also deals indirectly with the events on Melos. Euripides' play *The Trojan Women* debuted on the Athenian stage in 415. Like almost all the tragic plays that have survived, it purported to deal with events from the mythological past, specifically the Greek war against Troy, which, the Greeks believed, had occurred some seven centuries before. The play focused on the aftermath of the war: Troy had been destroyed, most of the Trojan men had been killed, and the Trojan women and children were waiting to be taken back to Greece as slaves of their conquerors. The Trojan women, led by the former queen Hecuba, are bemoaning their fate. Hecuba was once happy, a queen loved by her people, surrounded by numerous children and a loving husband. The war has brought all this to an end. Her husband and most of her sons are now dead; during the play most of her daughters are being carried off into slavery; another daughter is slaughtered on the tomb of Achilles to appease his ghost, and her grandson Astyanax, the son of Hector, is thrown from the walls so that he will not one day grow up and seek revenge; his body is later brought on stage. Troy is burned to the ground.

The play is a searing indictment of the Melian expedition and the decision of the Athenian people to commit similar violent acts after its conclusion. Euripides emphasizes some of the same themes as Thucydides: might essentially makes right, whether it is the Greeks at Troy or the Athenians at Melos, and war affects the winner as well as the losers, as the morality they had once lived by is corrupted by the pressures of conflict. Talthybius the Greek herald has difficulty carrying out the duties he has been assigned and can barely bring himself to demand that Astyanax be handed over: "What is needed for this type of job is a herald unaffected by pity, a man more disposed to cruelty in his heart than I am."¹⁸

Yet, of course, he still follows his orders; he is still a tool to be used in the commission of these acts, though it is implied that they may haunt him in the future. It is also noted that the gods are not trustworthy protectors; they did not save Troy, nor did they save Melos. Last but not least, the play is an effort by Euripides to bring the horrors and the suffering of war literally into the laps of the Athenian people so that they can see what their decisions have wrought. Some of those present may have been at the assembly that voted to kill or enslave the Melians; others may have been on the island and may have actually carried out the orders. Ultimately, the play asks whether any objective could be worth the infliction of such suffering.

Events like Melos were evidence of what contemporaries believed was a decline in Greek character and morality. It also led to a decline in the Greeks' confidence; something must be wrong with the *polis* and in themselves if events like Melos could be happening on a regular basis. This loss of the faith that had done so much to inspire the accomplishments of the Golden Age was one of the great casualties of the war.

The Naval Campaign: Peloponnesian War, Part II, 413–404

In 415, Athens made one of the great blunders of the war by attempting to conquer the island of Sicily. In 413, almost the entire Athenian expeditionary force was wiped out near the Sicilian city of Syracuse, leaving Athens with barely 10,000 *hoplites* and 100 *triremes*. The Syracusan disaster was only the beginning: between 413 and 410 Athens suffered numerous external and internal blows that nearly destroyed the city. The Spartans decided to renew the Peloponnesian War and invaded Attica in 413. For the first time, they built a permanent fort in Athenian territory at Decelea. Many subjects of the Athenian Empire now decided it would be a great time to rise up in rebellion. In 411, oligarchs in Athens, who had suffered the most economic losses because of the war, seized power and drove out the democrats. The Athenian fleet was at Samos at the time of the coup, and, since most of the sailors were lower-class Athenian citizens, they were not at all happy with the change in government. The sailors at Samos then declared that they represented the true government, the democratic government of Athens. So, on top of all the external crises, the Athenians were now literally divided.

In addition to these problems, what would prove in the long run to be the most dangerous threat to the Athenians was the sudden reappearance on the Greek stage of the ancient enemy Persia. By the Peace of Callias in 449, the Persians had essentially agreed to stay away from all Greek lands. Yet the Persians were not content with the new status quo, which gave Athens control of cities that had once belonged to the great king. So the Persians now saw an opportunity to bring down Athens by providing financial aid to its enemies. Persia would follow a similar strategy even after the Peloponnesian War had ended; when one Greek state became too powerful and potentially a threat to Persia, Persia would again intervene in Greek affairs by aiding those Greek states fighting against the growing power. In this way, with minimal effort, the Persians were able to help keep the Greeks weak and divided for nearly eight decades.

In the Peloponnesian War, the Persians intervened in Greek affairs on the side of the Spartans. Specifically, they provided funds to allow the Spartans to build a navy in return for Spartan assurances that in case of an Athenian defeat its subject cities in Asia would be turned over to Persia. Not surprisingly, Sparta kept this part of the bargain secret. Now, for the first time in the war, Sparta could challenge the Athenians on the sea. Previously, neither side could challenge the other in its position of strength, meaning that no decisive battle could be fought. Now the Spartan navy could challenge Athenians' control of their empire and the trade routes that allowed Athens to survive the long blockade. More important, Persian money was nearly unlimited, meaning that even if the Spartans lost a fleet or even more than one, the Persians could provide more money to build replacements. The Peloponnesian War, Part II, would be very different from the Peloponnesian War, Part I, as the entire dynamic of the war had changed. The outcome would now be decided on the sea.

The Rules of Naval Warfare

There were eight important rules under which the naval war would be conducted.

First, there were two vital theaters of war: Ionia, meaning both the mainland coast and the islands, and the Hellespont. Ionia was important because so many Athenian subjects were in this region. The Hellespont, a narrow body of water connecting the Black Sea and the Aegean, was the lifeline of Athens; through it flowed supplies and especially food from the shores of the Black Sea that the city needed to survive.

Second, money was vital to a naval war effort. For the Spartans, that meant securing Persian help even if it meant bargaining away Greek cities to Persian control. Persian cash meant pay for Spartan rowers, supplies, and even clothing. The amount contributed was huge: during one period, the Persians contributed 30 *talents* to keep 55 Spartan *triremes* in service for one month. Without this money, there would be no Spartan fleet and, consequently, no challenge to the Athenians. For the Athenians, it was vital to control their subjects who provided them with tribute. Their empire ensured that tribute would continue to flow into Athens to finance the Athenian navy, which protected the imports that literally kept the Athenians alive. For the Athenians, continued control of their empire was vital because it provided the necessary funds to finance their navy and offset Persia's economic aid to Sparta. To supplement their revenues, both Sparta and Athens used their navies to collect extra money from both friendly and hostile *poleis*. In 411, Athenian forces were operating in Thrace, Thasos, and Macedonia, all in an effort to acquire money, through plunder if necessary. Not surprisingly, the more money plundered or collected, the happier the men and the better their morale.

Third, keeping a fleet well supplied was a very difficult job. Even a modest naval force of 30 *triremes* would have at least 6,000 men to feed. Money was vital because it paid for the necessary supplies. If tribute collection from states did not suffice, plundering enemy states of money or goods would substitute.

Fourth, it was vital for both sides to protect their allies and subjects from hostile attack so that these sources of goods and tribute would not be lost. This meant helping allied or subject states by providing soldiers or ships when necessary. It was also important to try to detach allies and subjects from their enemy. Various methods were used to seduce *poleis*. For example, Athens or Sparta could encourage either democratic or oligarchic revolutions through bribery, through a blockade, or by using military force or the threat of force to influence the local people within a given *polis* to overthrow a hostile government from the inside. Sometimes relatively small forces could bring about the necessary changes; in smaller *poleis* even three or four *triremes* with marines might be sufficient. Whatever the methods necessary, it was imperative to win over as many *poleis* as possible because new allies or subjects could then provide so many things vital to the war effort: supplies of

all kinds, especially food, and tribute. At the same time, these things would then be denied to the enemy.

Fifth, possessing and maintaining naval bases was vital to all the operations just listed. A base had to have a good harbor, natural or manmade, to protect ships from storms and from the enemy. The harbor had to be easy to defend from land, and, if necessary, fortifications could be built on the spot. The base must also be close to the enemy or to hostile cities or astride vital sea lanes to permit soldiers to easily spot enemy movements and to launch attacks when the opportunity arose. Bases would provide the necessary space for crews to eat their meals and to sleep, both of which were impossible on board the narrow deck and in the limited space of a *trireme*. A base would also provide a place to repair damaged ships or merely a place to drag them on to land to dry them out, which was necessary from time to time. Bases could be used as supply depots and also as places to store equipment such as the sails when speed was of the essence. On one occasion, when the Athenians wished to attack Chios, they surrounded the island with a string of four forts: two were placed on the mainland across from Chios, another was built on a small island just off the island, and the last was on the island of Lesbos, to the north. These bases could be used to launch plundering raids on Chios and to intercept any shipping going to or from the island.

Sixth, the gathering of reliable information concerning the enemy's whereabouts and movements was crucial. Bases could provide a place from which to keep a close eye on the enemy. Small lookout posts could be established in places of vital interest where there was insufficient space to establish a large permanent base. Since fleets usually hugged the coasts, lookouts could be established along the coasts watching well-traveled sea lanes. Because the Hellespont was so vital to their interests, the Athenians stationed lookouts on Lesbos and on the mainland coast across from the island to ensure that no Peloponnesian warships could pass north through the narrow channel towards the Hellespont. They also had lookouts at the entrance to the Hellespont. If an enemy fleet was sighted, they used fires to signal their admirals and the fleet, which were further into the channel, at a permanent base at Sestos. The Athenians also had nine *triremes* always on patrol in the Hellespont to watch for enemy vessels and to protect their merchant ships. Patrols were often sent out to spy on an enemy or search for an enemy. Information could be gleaned from other sources: neutral merchant vessels or local populations, whether friendly or unfriendly, could be mined for information even if bribery or force was necessary.

Seventh, new naval tactics developed over the course of the fifth century. There was the *periplous* ("sailing around"), in which fast triremes manned by experienced crews attempted to quickly outflank enemy naval lines and then swiftly change direction in order to ram enemy ships broadside. The *diekplous* ("sailing through") was a similar tactic in which fast ships sailed into an enemy line between enemy ships and then suddenly turned to hit one of the ships broadside. The modern *trireme Olympias* has proven that such maneuvers were indeed possible. Generally, navies with faster ships

and better crews preferred to fight in the open sea, where their speed and experience would be an advantage. Through most of the war, the Athenians had these advantages and often attempted to draw the Spartans ships away from coastal refuges. Often, navies would send out small groups of ships first to entice an enemy to sail out away from the coast and then surprise the enemy by having a larger number of ships suddenly appear on the scene. Sometimes entire fleets would sail out in an effort to provoke combat, heckling their opponents in the process; sometimes this type of direct challenge was so humiliating that admirals would feel obligated to fight. Marines also became an integral part of naval war. *Hoplites* would be stationed with the fleet, as would lightly armed troops and, sometimes, even rowers armed specifically for the occasion. Marines would be stationed on deck to prevent enemy soldiers from getting on board, and they would also seize opportunities to board enemy ships and take possession of them. It was considered a great coup if enemy ships could be captured intact, since they could obviously then be used in future battles. Squadrons in trouble could attempt to outrun enemy vessels, or they could quickly head for shore and beach their ships. They would then rely on their marines to hold off the marines of the enemy and to preserve control of the ships. If things looked dire, sailors often resorted to burning their own ships rather than allow them to fall into enemy hands. Blockades could also be used to trap the enemy ships in a narrow confined space, since without supplies the marines would either have to fight their way out or surrender.

Eighth, naval defeats could never weaken the power of the Spartan army and therefore could not threaten Sparta's survival or its prosecution of the war. Persian wealth was practically inexhaustible, so the destruction of one fleet simply led to an influx of Persian money to finance a new one. For Athens, though, every naval battle threatened its very existence. After the Sicilian disaster, Athens no longer had the naval or economic resources to absorb more than one major defeat. One Spartan victory and Athens would lose its fleet, control of its empire, and the wealth the empire produced. Without its fleet, and without money to build new ships, the Athenians could not control vital trade routes and the supply lines upon which the city depended. In short, an Athenian defeat on the sea now meant an end to the war.

The Rules of Naval Warfare in Action: The Battles of Cynosemma, Abydos, and Cyzicus, 411–410

In 411, with the naval war in Ionia not producing the proper results, the Spartans decided on a bold new strategy: a move against Athenian control of the Hellespont. As noted earlier, the Hellespont was literally the lifeline of Athens, as most of the food for its besieged population came down this waterway from the Black Sea. The Athenians already held many of the cities in the Hellespont and had established various lookouts and patrols to deny the Spartans entry. However, the Spartans had managed to establish a base at Abydos, on the southern shore of the Hellespont, by marching an army

overland through Anatolia from Miletus; it now had 16 *triremes* stationed there. For the Spartans, acquiring the base at Abydos was a good start, but as yet they could not seriously threaten Athenian control of the Hellespont. Mindarus, the new *navarch* (admiral) of the Spartan fleet, was stationed with 73 *triremes* at Miletus far to the southwest along the coast of Ionia. He wanted to move these ships into the Hellespont to join with those at Abydos. He knew his arrival there would represent such a serious threat to Athenians' survival that they would be forced to fight a battle in the confined waters of the Hellespont, which would negate their superior speed and tactical ability. If the fighting did not go well, the nearby beaches would also provide places of refuge on which the superior Spartan marines, possibly with help from the nearby Persians, would have an advantage.

The problem was getting his 73 ships past the 75 Athenian *triremes* stationed at Samos. The Athenian base was well positioned to see the movement of the Spartans, and Mindarus did not want to fight the superior Athenian fleet in the open sea. He devised a ruse: he carefully organized the preparation for the voyage in such a way as to not alert the Athenian lookouts. He then waited until the last possible minute before ordering his men to leave immediately without the overt preparations with which a long voyage usually commenced. Most likely, the move out of Miletus took place at night, since Athenians did not discover the Spartan departure for some time. Apparently, Mindarus intended to head west into the open sea, skirting the western end of the island of Samos rather than going along the coast of Ionia and the eastern end of the island, where there was only a very narrow channel visible to the Athenians. A storm, though, forced him further west, to the island of Icarus, where the fleet was delayed nearly a week. At some point, the Athenians realized that the Spartans had departed and correctly guessed they were making for the Hellespont; they, too, now raced north to bar the Spartans entry. Because of the delay, Mindarus did not make an immediate run to the Hellespont but set off north across the open sea to Chios, an ally of Sparta. The Athenians learned of this and therefore halted their dash toward the Hellespont and instead stopped at Lesbos, directly north of Chios. The Athenians now expected the Spartans to remain at Chios, since their way north was blocked. Unfortunately, during the second part of the war, the Athenians had two missions that often pulled them in different directions and served to divide their forces, something they could ill afford after the disaster in Sicily. The Athenians not only had to fight the new Spartan fleet and keep it out of the Hellespont but also had to prevent revolts by its subjects, which threatened its tribute. Now, in 411, Eresus, one of the subject cities on the southwest coast of Lesbos, revolted. The Athenians posted lookouts on the east coast of Lesbos and on the mainland opposite, believing they would be alerted if the Spartans attempted to sail past. Then, most of the Athenian ships and men moved to crush the revolt. This meant that the main Athenian fleet was out of position when the Spartans moved from Chios. The Spartans received from their allies on Chios supplies and pay for their men; this provisioning took two days. On the third day, far sooner than the Athenians had

expected any type of move, they sailed out. Mindarus did not immediately sail north into the open sea as he had before because he wished to avoid the main Athenian fleet at Eresus. Instead, he sailed east, skirting the promontory of Mount Mimas, to the Ionian coast, far to the south of the Athenian lookouts. The sailors disembarked to eat in the neighborhood of Phocaea before spending the rest of the day moving north along the coast. They ate their dinner at the Arginousae Islands, just out of range of the Athenian lookouts, who were directly north along the coast and northwest on Lesbos. They then waited for darkness and sailed between Lesbos and the coast at night, thwarting the efforts of the Athenian lookouts to detect their passing. They halted again to eat at Harmatus, which was just across the straight from Methymna, a city allied to Athens. If it had been light, they surely would have been spotted, but, again through careful planning and a little bit of luck, they arrived at Harmatus before dawn. The next day, they moved quickly north along the coast until, a little before midnight, they came to Rhoeteum, just inside the Hellespont. It had taken a little less than two days to move 73 *triremes* from Chios to the Hellespont, and the Spartans had been successful in avoiding detection or confrontation with the Athenians trying to block their passage. For the first time in the war, the Spartans had arrived in strength in the Hellespont. They would remain a threat to it for the war's duration. The nature of the Peloponnesian War and the focus of the naval battle had now switched theaters.

The Athenians stationed at the base at Sestos, on the Hellespont's northern shore, were alerted to the Spartan's arrival by the signal fires from the lookouts and by the sudden and dramatic rise in the enemy campfires across the Hellespont on the southern shore. Now massively outnumbered, the 18 Athenian *triremes* at Sestos then tried to sneak out of Hellespont to rejoin the rest of the fleet. They left by night and so were hidden from the view of the Spartan base at Abydos as they moved along the northern shore of the Hellespont. However, they did not time their run well, for at daybreak they were still in the Hellespont and were spotted by the ships of Mindarus. The Spartans chased the tiny Athenian fleet, and four ships were sunk; the rest got away. The Spartans returned to Abydos, their combined fleet now numbering 86. Meanwhile, the Athenians at Eresus had finally been informed of the Spartans' success in reaching the Hellespont despite their efforts. Realizing immediately the threat to Athens' survival, they raced to the Hellespont, picking up the stragglers from Sestos along the way. The Athenians now had 76 *triremes*.

Both sides were now ready to fight a major naval battle. Mindarus wanted to fight a naval battle in the confined waters in the hope of negating the Athenian advantages in speed and experience. Also, since the battle would be fought close to land, Mindarus hoped to block the Athenians' escape out to the open sea and instead to drive the Athenians onto shore and there use his superior marines; he could also use the beach or Abydos as a refuge in case the attack did not go well. The Athenians had to fight as well; they could not allow a Spartan fleet to exist in the Hellespont because it would threaten the shipments of grain on which Athens depended.

The battle was fought in October 411 off Point Cynossema. Both lines of *triremes* stretched from the north to the southwest toward the Hellespont entry. Syracusans manned the Spartan right, while Mindarus held the left. Thrasybulus, one of Athens' great naval heroes, held the right wing of the Athenian line, while Thrasyllus, who was responsible for allowing the Spartans to sneak past him in the first place, commanded the left. When the battle began, Mindarus headed southwest to block the Athenians, but even in the narrow channel the Athenian ships were still faster, so Thrasybulus was able to avoid the encircling move and instead get around the Spartan left. He immediately turned back to the northwest, hitting the Spartan ships from the sides and from behind. He broke the Spartan left and then continued north to attack the Spartan center, which had pushed the Athenian center back to the beach. However, the Spartan ships had become disorganized during their pursuit of the Athenians, and they were easy prey for Thrasybulus and the Athenian right. The Spartan center scattered as it attempted to make it back to the southern shore or the base at Abydos. When the Syracusans on the right saw their line disintegrating, they too broke and fled, and Thrasyllus and the Athenian left, which had been hard pressed, now went over to the attack. The Athenians won the battle. Diodorus, a Greek historian from Sicily, described the causes of Athenian success:

The pilots of the Athenian fleet, being far superior in experience, contributed greatly to the victory. For although the Peloponnesians had more ships and the valor of their marines, the skill of the Athenian pilots rendered useless the superiority of their opponents. Whenever the Peloponnesians charged forward to ram, the Athenian pilots would maneuver their own ships so skillfully that their opponents were unable to strike them at any spot but could only meet them ram against ram. When Mindarus saw that the force of his rams was ineffective, he gave orders for his ships to come to grips in small groups or one at a time. . . . The Athenians though cleverly avoided the on-coming rams of the ships and struck them on the side and damaged many.¹⁹

The Athenians set up a trophy, and the dead were collected under truce. The Athenians destroyed 21 enemy ships. Though the numbers were not great, they had avoided defeat in the battle and therefore had avoided defeat in the war. A *trireme* was sent to Athens with the good news, and after all the recent disasters Athens had suffered, the victory served to revive the Athenian population. According to Thucydides, "the good news . . . greatly heartened the Athenians and they came to believe that if they fought resolutely, final victory was still possible."²⁰

In the immediate aftermath of Cynossema, the Spartans were still in the Hellespont with a substantial fleet, significant bases, and Persian support. Both sides now called for reinforcements from home and from their allies and subjects. *Triremes* raced to the Hellespont from all over the Greek world. Both sides still desired battle for the same reasons as at Cynossema. In November of 411, a second major battle was fought at Abydos. Fourteen Spartan ships attempted to sneak into the Hellespont to join up with their comrades at Abydos. They were spotted by the Athenian lookouts, who

warned the Athenian commanders at Sestos. The Athenian fleet sailed out to attack, while Mindarus and the Spartans at Abydos raced in to protect their comrades. A tense battle ensued that lasted much of the day until 18 new ships appeared from the west heading toward the battle. The 18 ships were Athenian vessels commanded by Alcibiades; when he came into sight of the battle, he hoisted a red flag to alert his comrades that he was indeed Athenian. His sudden appearance at Abydos turned the battle in favor of the Athenians. The Spartans fled back to Abydos after losing 30 ships.

During the winter of 411–410, both sides prepared for the coming campaign season; the Spartans at Abydos, with Persian money, spent time repairing their ships and building new ones, while the Athenian commanders in the Hellespont Thrasybulus and Theramenes spent their time in the northern Aegean collecting money either through tribute or by plundering. In 410, both sides were again willing to give battle. The Spartans moved first, capturing Cyzicus with the help of the Persians. The Spartans now had a base further east in the Hellespont; Mindarus and 80 *triremes* were stationed there. The Athenians, again recognizing a threat to their very survival, devised a complicated strategy. Their fleet would be led by their most successful admirals of the war: Thrasybulus, Theramenes, and Alcibiades. They moved toward Cyzicus in heavy rain to conceal their approach, then divided up their forces: Alcibiades took 40 *triremes* and headed straight for Cyzicus, while Thrasybulus and Theramenes remained hidden to the north of the city. When Mindarus saw only 40 ships approaching, he believed he had a great numerical advantage, so he led out his 80 ships. Alcibiades and his ships pretended to flee to the west, dragging the Spartans further out to sea. Then Alcibiades suddenly turned to fight, and Theramenes and Thrasybulus appeared, seemingly out of nowhere. Theramenes moved south to cut off a Spartan retreat back to the city, and Thrasybulus moved southwest to prevent a Spartan escape out of the Hellespont. Mindarus realized he was trapped and immediately ordered his men to make for the beach at Cleri. Thrasybulus realized what was happening and devised a new strategy, somehow signaling the other two squadrons to attack the beach. The naval battle turned into a land battle as the Athenians followed in pursuit. There was a long, drawn-out struggle among the ships, but when Mindarus was killed, the Spartans and their Persian allies, now surrounded on all sides by the marines of Alcibiades, Theramenes to the east, and Thrasybulus to the west, suddenly broke and fled, giving Athens the victory. In one of the great laconic messages in the history of war reporting, the surviving Spartans sent a brief letter back to Sparta describing the situation: “Ships lost. Mindarus dead. Men starving. Don’t know what to do.”²¹

The Athenians set up two trophies to commemorate their victories, one for the naval victory and one for the victory on land.

The Battle of Cyzicus, coming so soon after Cynossema and Abydos, was huge for the Athenians. The Spartan presence in the Hellespont was ended, and the trade routes that fed Athens were again safe. The Athenians captured Cyzicus and were able to collect tribute from the city and the surrounding areas. The Athenians also established a new fort at Chrysopolis to tax trade

that flowed through the Bosphorus, and this became an important source of revenue for the cash-strapped city. Despite the disasters in Sicily, the revolts in the empire, and the new challenge of a Spartan navy, seemingly the Athenians had now weathered the worst of the storm.

The Fall of Athens: 406–404

From 410, Athenian fortunes steadily rose. The Spartans now held only Abydos, Chios, and a few cities on the Ionian coast; the momentum of the war had clearly turned in favor of Athens. However, a number of events in 406 would doom the Athenian war effort. The first was the appointment of a new Spartan *navarch*, Lysander. Lysander would prove to be the best admiral Sparta produced in the war. The second blow was the Battle of Notium. Alcibiades was very popular with many Athenians, but there was still a bitter minority that for various reasons was looking for an opportunity to ruin him. Alcibiades was in command of the fleet at Notium, and one day he led some of his soldiers inland on a plundering expedition. He had left the navy under the command of Antiochus and had ordered that under no circumstances was he to lead the navy out. However, once Alcibiades was gone, Antiochus did exactly that, looking for his opportunity to win military glory. The Athenian fleet found the Spartans led by Lysander and suffered a minor defeat in which Antiochus was killed. Though this was not a major disaster, it was the opportunity that enemies of Alcibiades were looking for. In the assembly, the blame for the defeat was placed squarely on his shoulders, and he was ordered to return to stand trial for negligence. Fearing he would not get a fair trial, he fled into exile, where he died a few years later.

The year 406 did provide one last great moment for the Athenian navy at the Battle of Arginousae, in what was the largest naval battle between Greek fleets in history. Through a massive effort, which included melting the gold and silver from their statues, the Athenians outfitted a fleet of 155 *triremes* to face 120 Spartan ships. In a huge Athenian victory, the Spartans lost 77 *triremes* while the Athenians lost 25. Seemingly, in one stroke, the Athenians had regained complete naval mastery of the Aegean. However, the victory did come at a huge price. After the battle, there were maybe a thousand Athenians from the 25 wrecked ships in the water. Usually, when battles were fought close to shore, it was much easier to pick up the survivors. However, this battle was fought in the open sea over a large area, and, to make things worse, a storm hit, making it very difficult to find the survivors. Conditions became so bad that the sailors refused to continue the search. Many of the bodies were never given proper burial, and those men who might have still been alive were lost. In Athens, this created a huge political firestorm. The eight generals were put on trial; all were convicted, and six were executed (two had never returned to Athens, guessing their probable fate).²² Theramenes and Thrasybulus, who were not in command but who had been involved in the unsuccessful rescue operation, were not convicted but fell into disfavor and

were not elected to serve as generals for 405. The Athenians had managed in less than a year to drive out, execute, or keep from office Alcibiades, the eight experienced admirals who had planned the great victory at Arginousae, and Thrasybulus and Theramenes, who had contributed so much to the Athenian recovery since 411. The various blows suffered by Athens in 406 served to negate their one great success at Arginousae and paved the way for defeat the next year. Even worse, when the Spartans offered to end the war in 406, their proposal was rejected by the Athenian assembly. After so many years of war and so much loss, and because of their series of victories since 411, they were now unwilling to contemplate anything less than total victory. An Athenian politician named Cleophon, supposedly drunk and wearing a breastplate, convinced the assembly in very threatening language to continue the war.

The decisive battle of the war took place at Aegospotomae, in the Hellespont, in 405. The Spartans, thanks to the seemingly limitless treasury of Persia, had been able to build a new fleet and had put it under the command of their best *navarch*, Lysander. After extensive training of his crews, Lysander wished to open the Hellespont as a theater of war to threaten the Athenian lifeline, something Sparta had been unable to do since the Athenian victories of 411–410. The Athenian fleet was based at Samos, blocking Lysander's route into the Hellespont. He therefore moved west, making a run at Athens itself. This maneuver served its purpose: the Athenians raced to protect their home city, allowing Lysander to move quickly back to Rhodes and then north along the Ionian coast, since the Athenians were no longer at Samos. Lysander entered the Hellespont and moved to Abydos, which was still allied to Sparta, though there had been no navy based there since 410; from there the Spartans attacked and conquered Lampsacus. The Athenians, realizing what had happened, moved to their base at Sestos and then to the beach of Aegospotami, just across the Hellespont from the Spartans at Lampsacus. Unfortunately, overconfidence, stemming from six years of naval victories, and the absence of their best admirals led the Athenians to make a number of blunders. Aegospotomae was not a suitable base: it was only a beach, with no nearby city or sources of water and food. The men had to leave their ships repeatedly to move inland to pick up needed supplies. Plutarch describes an Athenian force unprepared for battle: "They would spend most of the day ashore, abandoning all discipline without even posting a lookout as though they despised the enemy."²³

Alcibiades happened to be living in exile nearby, so he went down to the Athenian camp and tried to warn the Athenians admirals that their position was weak and that the fleet should be moved immediately. They responded by saying, "We are in command, not you."²⁴

Each day, the Athenians would sail out and try to provoke Lysander into battle; when that failed, they would return to the beach and then go off in every direction seeking supplies. On the fifth day, the Athenians again tried to bait Lysander into battle, but again he seemingly refused. The Athenians returned to shore, only to find Lysander and the Spartan fleet suddenly

bearing down on them. Only nine Athenian *triremes* escaped; the rest, almost 200 *triremes*, were captured on the beach along with their crews. Lysander then executed more than 3,000 Athenian prisoners. The Athenian general Philocles faced his fate bravely. When asked by Lysander what punishment he deserved for treating other Greeks so badly, Philocles brazenly replied:

“Lysander do not play the prosecutor in a case where there is no judge, deal out the exact same punishment you would have suffered had you been defeated.” Then Philocles bathed, put on a splendid cloak, and led his fellow Athenians to execution, offering himself as the first victim.²⁵

Without its navy, Athens had effectively lost the war. The news of the disaster was brought to Athens by the *Paralus* (which along with the *Saliminius* was one of two fast *triremes* used by the Athenian state to send messages). The news came at night to the Piraeus, and, according to the Athenian historian Xenophon (430–355), who may have been an eyewitness, a “wail” went up from the harbor, along the Long Walls and into the city as the news passed from one person to another. No one in Athens slept that night, so upset were they by the great defeat and also because of their fears of the immediate future as they saw a fate similar to that which they had meted out to Melos as a very real possibility.

Lysander, meanwhile, sailed around the Aegean overthrowing governments friendly to Athens and installing narrow oligarchies of 10 (native) men to rule on Sparta’s behalf. He then arrived outside the Piraeus at the same time the Spartan army, led by the two kings, Agis II (r. 427–400) and Pausanias (r. 408–395), encamped just outside the Long Walls. The Spartans had been unable throughout the war to break into Athens; now they would not have to, for they would wait outside the city until the food ran out and Athens was forced to surrender. By 404, with the population of Athens starving, Athens sued for peace. The Spartans held a congress of their allies to decide Athens’ fate. Some states, most notably Thebes and Corinth, wanted to impose *andrapodismos* (killing all the men and enslaving the women and children) as punishment for Melos and other atrocities. The Spartans refused, but they did impose harsh peace terms: the end of the Athenian Empire, the end of the Athenian navy except for 12 *triremes*, the destruction of the Long Walls, and the installation of a new narrow oligarchy of 30 men (which would last only until 403) to replace the democracy. The Spartans and their allies then celebrated their victory on the sixteenth day of the month of Munychion (September 20, 404), the anniversary of the great victory over the Persians at Salamis 76 years before. People came from all over Greece to watch as the Long Walls, the hated symbol of Athenian power, were pulled down. According to Plutarch:

Lysander sent for a great company of flute girls from the city and collected all those who were in his camp. Then to the sound of their music, he pulled down the Long Walls and burned the *triremes* while the allies garlanded themselves with flowers, rejoiced together, and hailed that day as the beginning of freedom for Greece.²⁶

THE FAILURE OF THE POLIS, 404–362

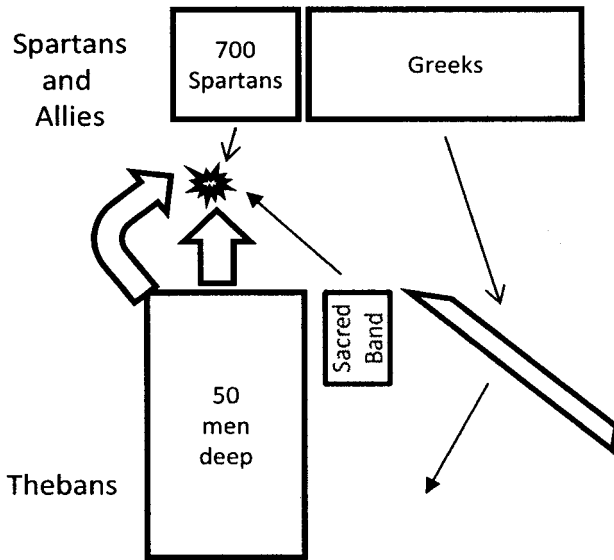
The Peloponnesian War had been a huge disaster for Greece, not only because of the level of violence and bloodshed but also because the war did not produce a better, more peaceful Greek world. Instead, the years after the Peloponnesian War were in many ways almost as bad as the war itself. At least within the Athenian Empire, peace had been preserved. Now, with the power of Athens broken, there was no state able to impose unity on at least a part of Greece. Sparta hoped to be the dominant power in the Greek world, but after the long and brutal war it had been seriously weakened. By 404 B.C.E., Sparta's *hoplite* citizen body had dropped to only 3,000. The Spartans still had to worry about the *helots*, who were always a threat to rebel, and now they also had to control the huge empire that their victory had brought them. This empire brought its own problems; most notably the influx of wealth and the acquisition of power corrupted the fabled Spartan discipline. Even worse, the Spartans were so highhanded in their administration of this empire that they quickly made themselves more hated than the Athenians had previously been. Those *poleis* subject to Sparta had been forced to accept very narrow oligarchies in which 10 men in each city were chosen by the Spartans to run that *polis* on their behalf. This made the democrats and even most oligarchs very upset, since the vast majority of the citizen body was barred from political participation. The only thing that kept the Spartan empire in line was fear of the Spartan *hoplite* army, which had not lost a major land battle in recorded history.

Epaminondas and the Tactical Revolution: Leuctra, 371

Thebes was one of the many cities now hostile toward the Spartans, even though the two states had been allies against Athens during the Peloponnesian War. Sparta briefly occupied Thebes until a daring uprising in 379 restored Theban independence. Relations between the two states remained strained throughout the decade until finally, in 371, war broke out. Sparta decided to crush Thebes once and for all; King Cleombrotus I (r. 380–371) led an army from Phocis into Boeotia to attack Thebes. The Spartan army numbered 9,000 *hoplites* and 1,000 cavalry. The Theban forces were led by Epaminondas (400–362) and consisted of 6,000 *hoplites* and 1,000 cavalry. The two armies met on the plain of Leuctra, which was 1,000 yards wide and bracketed by two small ridges upon which the two armies pitched their camp (see Figure 4.2).

Seemingly, the odds favored the Spartans. They had far more men, and their military abilities were legendary. However, there were a few problems. Most of the soldiers in the Spartan army were not Spartans; instead, they were *hoplites* from subject Greek states forced to fight. The Spartan contingent numbered only 700 *hoplites*; the steady decline in manpower over the previous century was now finally about to take its toll. Moreover the Theban *boeotarch* (leader) Epaminondas was about to prove that he was one of the great military leaders in Greek history by introducing revolutionary tactics

Figure 4.2
Battle of Leuctra, 371



to warfare that would have a profound effect on later commanders. He knew that the key to the enemy *phalanx* was the Spartan contingent; if he could somehow destroy it or drive it from the field, he believed, the other soldiers would not stand and fight. Therefore, he lined up most of his best *hoplites* on the left side of his line to face the Spartans, who of course would be in the position of honor on the right. His left wing was 50 men deep; the norm for the *phalanx* was 8 men, and the Spartans were 12 men deep at Leuctra. The use of such a deep wing was unusual but not unprecedented: the Thebans had been 25 deep on their right wing and had enjoyed success at Delium in 424. What was revolutionary is that, for maybe the first time ever, the best and deepest part of the *phalanx* was on the left, poised to meet the enemy's best soldiers. In many battles, the best soldiers on the right wings often did not actually meet, but now Epaminondas was going to strengthen his left wing, which by its very weight of numbers would overwhelm even the vaunted Spartans. Also important was the elite, professional unit of the Theban army known as the Sacred Band. This unit was created by Gorgidas just after Thebes was liberated from Sparta in 379 and was funded by the state. It consisted of 150 pairs of homosexual lovers, 300 men altogether. Plutarch explained why such a unit was so effective: "A band which was united by the ties of love is truly indissoluble and unbreakable since both lovers are ashamed to

be disgraced in the presence of the other and each stands his ground in the moment of danger to protect the other."²⁷

The band was the only professional military unit in Greece outside of Sparta and as such was maybe the most effective Greek fighting force of its time. It could be used not only in the line or to lead the charge of the *phalanx* but also as an effective reserve force that could quickly be flung into the battle by a general to exploit any situation that might arise. Epaminondas also did something unique with his right wing. Traditionally, the right wing was the position of honor, and that was where the best soldiers in the army were placed. But now Epaminondas had placed his best soldiers on the left, and his right was therefore weakened. For his plan to work, he needed to crush the Spartans quickly so that the enemy left could see this and flee before it overwhelmed his own weakened right. To effect this, he lined up his men on the right *in echelon* (diagonally); the front tip of the diagonal line was in his center front and touched his heavy left wing, while the right end of this line tapered away from the front and from the enemy. This strategy would later become common in ancient warfare and would be used by Alexander the Great at the decisive battle of Gaugamela 40 years later. Last, Epaminondas coordinated his infantry units with his cavalry. His cavalry would not sit on the wings guarding the flanks of the army, as was traditional; instead, it would be used ahead of the battle to drive off the Spartan cavalry, sow confusion in the enemy ranks, and act as a screening force to hide from the enemy much of the tactics he was trying to employ. This, too, was new and would impact the later careers of Philip and Alexander among many others.

Religion always played a part in war, and in the Greek world omens before battle were of particular importance. Pelopidas (406–364), the commander of the Sacred Band, had a dream the night before Leuctra that the Thebans must sacrifice a red-haired virgin to the gods to ensure victory. When he awoke, he spoke to his fellow generals about his dream, and they were in a great quandary as to what to do, since they did not want to sacrifice a person, but at the same time they did not want to ignore what seemed to be clear sign from the gods and risk their wrath. But, as they were debating their course of action, a filly suddenly ran away from a group of horses through the Theban camp. The men marveled at her strength and speed and especially at her color, which was fiery red. At that, one of the priests accompanying the army cried out, "The gods are with you! Here is your victim. Let us not wait for any other virgin, but take the gift the gods have provided you." They then crowned her with garlands, consecrated her with prayers, and joyfully offered up the sacrifice.²⁸

They then explained to the army the meaning of the sacrifice and Pelopidas's dream, thus convincing the men that they now enjoyed divine favor.

The opposing armies faced each other on the battlefield, the Spartan army drawn up in the traditional *phalanx* with King Cleombrotus and the Spartans soldiers holding the position of honor on the right. Xenophon makes a reference to the drinking of wine by the Spartans before the battle, which may have affected them. Across the field was the Theban army in its

revolutionary formation: massed *hoplites* 50 deep on the left, the rest of the army lined up obliquely on the right. The cavalries of both armies were stationed in front of the *phalanxes*.

The cavalries quickly moved forward and were the first units to engage. The Theban cavalry was far superior to that of the Spartans and quickly drove it back into its own *phalanx*, causing serious disruption of the Spartan line and also screening their view of the approaching Theban *phalanx*. Epaminondas and the Theban left wing were veering to the left, hoping that the Spartans would see this maneuver and move to their right to avoid encirclement. However, this would detach the Spartans from the rest of their *phalanx*, leaving gaps. Epaminondas exploited this: he ordered the Sacred Band led by Pelopidas to dash forward and exploit the gaps that had now opened in the enemy line. This threw the Spartans into confusion, and they were unable to recover when the massive Theban left now moved over to the attack. The weight of Theban numbers proved decisive; 400 of the 700 Spartans were killed, including the king. On the Spartan left, their allies had been unable to come to grips with the retreating, oblique Theban right, and once they realized the Spartans were being defeated, they were unwilling to continue fighting. The left wing broke and fled. Against all odds, Thebes had defeated Sparta.

Leuctra was one of the pivotal battles of Greek history. First, it inaugurated a period of increasing sophistication and complexity in Greek warfare. Second, it broke Spartan power suddenly and forever. So many Spartans *hoplites* fell at Leuctra that there were now fewer than 1,000 left, too few to control their empire. Maybe more important, the myth of the invincible Spartan *hoplite* was shattered forever. Rebellions began almost immediately and were not confined merely to central or northern Greece; the Peloponnesus rose up as well, and the Peloponnesian League, which had buttressed Spartan power for so long, disintegrated.

Worse was to follow; in 370 and 369, Epaminondas, with 40,000 men (maybe the largest Greek army seen to that point), led an invasion of Laconia; for the first time, enemy soldiers crossed the Eurotas River into the heart of the Spartan homeland. Epaminondas was unable to take Sparta itself, but he did ravage its once inviolable territory, and, more important, he freed the *helots* and restored the independence of Messenia, with a new capital at Messene. Without the *helots*, the foundation upon which the unique Spartan social and military system had been built was broken. From this point on, Sparta would be a second-rate power and would never recover its former glory.

For a brief time, Thebes, led by Epaminondas and Pelopidas, attempted to fill the vacuum created by Sparta's demise and to bring Theban rule to its fellow *poleis*. However, though the Greeks could not find a way to create a unified Greece, the *poleis* did value their freedom sufficiently to join together when one city was becoming too powerful. In this case, numerous *poleis* joined together to stop Thebes. These states included many that Thebes had helped win their freedom from Sparta; Athens and Sparta were

fighting on the same side for the first time since Plataea. In 362, the Second Battle of Mantinea was fought (the first was in 418). Once again, the Thebans, led by Epaminondas, seemed to be carrying the day. But, before victory could be secured, Epaminondas was killed in the fighting, ensuring that the battle would end in a draw.

The epitaph on Epaminondas' tomb summed up his impact: he had humbled Sparta, liberated Messenia, and freed all of Greece. Unfortunately, this was not exactly accurate. The historian Xenophon, a contemporary of Epaminondas, better summarized Mantinea's impact:

The result of this battle was just the opposite of what everyone expected it would be. Nearly the whole of Greece had been engaged on one side or the other and everyone imagined that if a battle was fought, the winner would become the dominant power and the losers would be their subjects. But the gods so ordered things that both parties put up trophies as for victory. Both sides claimed the victory but it cannot be said that with regard to the accession of new territory or cities or power either side was any better off after the battle than it had been before. In fact, there was even more uncertainty and confusion in Greece after the battle than there had been previously.²⁹

Xenophon, maybe in despair, threw up his hands: "Let this then be the end of my history. Someone else perhaps will deal with what happened next."³⁰

What happened next was further division and anarchy in the Greek world. The *poleis* could not agree on any form of unity, and no *polis* was powerful enough to impose unity and keep the peace. Athens, Sparta, and, most recently, Thebes had attempted to rule over Greece or at least parts of Greece, yet all had failed to make their hegemony last. Ultimately, the *polis* had failed as a political system, because it had been unable to prevent constant war and constant civil war and because it was unable to produce a unified Greek state. Unity would come to Greece, but it would come from outside the *polis* world. It would be the Greek kingdom of Macedonia that would finally enforce order on the Hellenic world.

Five

Macedonia, 359–323 B.C.E.

THE RISE OF MACEDONIA, 359–336

Before 359 B.C.E., the political history of Greece was centered on the *poleis* of the south. Beginning in 359, a new power arose in the north: the Kingdom of Macedonia. Macedonia did not develop the *polis* but instead had remained a kingdom similar to those found in the pages of Homer. The Macedonians had a heroic monarchy, which meant, among other things, that the king did not have absolute power. The heroic monarch was expected to lead the Macedonian army into battle, literally from the front. Not surprisingly, this was often dangerous, and many kings were killed in battle. However, Macedonia was blessed with many natural resources. It had incredibly fertile soil, which supported a large population by Greek standards. It may have had 500,000 people, twice the size of the biggest *polis*, Athens. Potentially, of course, this meant a huge army of tough fighters including hardy mountaineers from the regions of Upper Macedonia. The Macedonians had something else that was rare in Greece, a large number of horses, meaning potentially a huge cavalry. And, Macedonia was rich in natural resources, including gold, iron, silver, copper, and timber.

The man who transformed Macedonia into the greatest power in Greece was King Philip II (r. 359–336). He inherited a weak kingdom divided in half between Lower Macedonia (where the king ruled at Pella) and the mountainous regions of Upper Macedonia (which was further subdivided into seven independent Macedonian kingdoms) and subject to almost constant attacks by northern tribes. First, he reorganized the Macedonian army. He created the *pezhetairoi* (infantry or “foot companions”) and in the process developed the nearly invincible Macedonian *phalanx*. He did something revolutionary by using his own money to pay Macedonian citizens to serve and to provide them with their armor and weapons and supplies. This was a break with the Greek *hoplite* tradition, in which generally only men who could afford to served in the army. Philip then armed the men of his *phalanx* with new, longer spears that apparently were his invention. In the past, Greek *hoplites* had 8-foot long spears; the Macedonian soldier would now use an 18-foot

long spear called the *sarissa*. With these longer spears, the Macedonian soldier had a huge reach advantage over his opponent, and an enemy would have to fight through nearly 15 feet of spears before even reaching the first man. During the following centuries, no enemy was able to break through the *phalanx* by a frontal assault. Philip then did something that was almost unknown outside of Sparta; he took the time to properly train his men. This meant imposing military discipline and getting his men into shape by the use of forced marches. Also, Philip had been a hostage in Thebes during the 360s and apparently had witnessed the training of the Theban army and its Sacred Band and the tactics employed by Epaminondas. Philip would train his men to pull off complicated maneuvers in battle as the Theban general had done at Leuctra. With this new training and the new longer spears, the Macedonian *phalanx* would become the most formidable infantry unit in the ancient world.

Philip also reorganized what was known as the *hetairoi* (Companion Cavalry, or the “Companions of the King”). The cavalry consisted of the great nobles of Macedonia who grew up literally on horseback, either hunting or fighting, and who wore the traditional helmet and scarf. Having a large cavalry gave Philip a huge advantage over the other Greek states because of the speed and height advantages enjoyed by men fighting on horseback. Cavalry could be used to punch holes in enemy formations, it could be used to chase down enemies who had fled, it could be used to guard the flanks and the rear of the Macedonia *phalanx*, and it could get from one place to another very quickly so that Philip could often surprise his enemies by appearing suddenly and without warning. The nobles in the Companion Cavalry were the officers of his army and his political advisers. Philip was extremely fortunate that he had an incredible concentration of talent amongst his cavalrymen. Last, the Companion Cavalry provided Philip with his drinking buddies. The Macedonians were huge alcoholics, and it was not unusual for people to die at Macedonian parties from alcohol poisoning.¹ These Companion Cavalrymen were expected to drink all night with the king, wake up the next day, win a battle, and drink again the next night.²

Philip II also established or reorganized a number of elite units that fulfilled a number of important functions within the Macedonian army. These units acted as bodyguards for the king when he was at court or at dinner and while he slept. They guarded him when he was on the hunt and while he marched and in battle functioned both as personal protection for the king and as a strategic reserve that could be sent by the king to any part of the battlefield or could be led by him in person. These units were also meant to enhance the majesty of the king. Though debate continues as to the particulars, in general it seems that the Macedonian kings had four units that fulfilled one or more of these functions. First were the seven *somatophylakes*, the elite bodyguard, consisting of some of the most important men in the kingdom. Second were the royal pages. Third were the units of elite infantry, usually chosen from the strongest, tallest, and bravest of the Macedonians. These were known (at various times) as the *agema*, the *hypaspistai*,

the *argyraspides* (Silver Shields), the *chalkaspides* (Bronze Shields), and the *peltastai*. Last but not least was the elite cavalry guard (*ile basilike*), later known as the *agema* of the cavalry. This last group was part of but a distinct unit within the larger group of the Companion Cavalry (*hetairoi*).

The final piece to the puzzle was Philip himself. He was to quickly prove that he was indeed a heroic monarch blessed with charisma and both military and political ability. His leadership would bring about a remarkable turn in Macedonian fortunes.

In 358, Philip was ready to try out his new army in battle. He moved west into Upper Macedonia to attack the Dardanian tribe and their king, Bardylis. The Battle of Lake Lychnitus pitted 10,000 Macedonian infantrymen and 600 cavalymen against a similarly sized Dardanian army. However, though the two armies seemed evenly matched, Philip's soldiers were now well trained and capable of carrying out his complex orders. In fact, the very discipline with which the Macedonians marched into battle frightened the enemy; Philip crushed the enemy army by employing the same tactics Epaminondas had used at Leuctra.

This was the foundation victory of all Philip's later success and of Macedonian power. First, the main threat to Macedonia had been destroyed. Also, as a result of this victory, Philip absorbed Upper Macedonia. However, he did not make the Upper Macedonians subjects but instead made them equal to the people of Lower Macedonia. The Upper Macedonian nobles and royal families became part of the Companion Cavalry. Many of these Upper Macedonians would be very important to the later success of the Macedonian army and would play a large role in the history of the kingdom. Philip had doubled the population of Macedonia by adding a large number of hearty mountain soldiers to his army. Also, the conquest of Upper Macedonia provided the kingdom with mountain frontiers, which were far easier to defend. And, most of all, by this victory, Philip proved what many had already suspected, that he was truly a heroic monarch; if they followed him, good things were going to happen. By 358 B.C.E., Philip had created a new Macedonian kingdom that was unified for the first time in its history, and he started it on a path of conquest that would bring it control of Greece and eventually much of the known world.

The Macedonian Conquest of Greece, 358–338

By 338, Philip had conquered the largest empire in Greek history. That year, Philip and his Macedonians would face the Athenians and their allies in one of the decisive battles of Greek history, the Battle of Chaeronea. The Macedonians had maybe the largest Greek army ever seen, 42,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry. The Greek alliance countered with 40,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry. The combined total was by far the largest number of Greeks ever gathered together on a single battlefield. In the Macedonian line, Philip commanded part of the Companion Cavalry on the right wing while his 18-year-old son Alexander (356–323) commanded the rest of the Companion

Cavalry on the left. In between was the Macedonian *phalanx*. In the Greek line, the Athenians held the left wing, while the Theban Sacred Band held the position of honor on the right. In the middle were the other Greek *hoplites*. Unfortunately for the Greeks, their soldiers were not as well trained or experienced as those of Philip, and they had little time to drill together before the battle. When the fighting began, Philip on the Macedonian right pretended to give ground. This pulled the Athenians on the left and the other Greeks in the center forward, isolating the Sacred Band on the right. It was then attacked by a cavalry charge led by Alexander. The Sacred Band was surrounded, and 254 of the unit's 300 soldiers were killed; they were later buried on the battlefield and a monument, "The Lion of Chaeronea," was erected over their graves. At this moment, Philip halted his retreat and went over to the attack. At the same time, Alexander wheeled quickly westward to attack the Greek *phalanx* from behind. The renewed assault of Philip and the sudden appearance of Alexander to their rear broke the Greek line; panic swept the Greek army, and most of the soldiers fled. Among those running from the battlefield was the Athenian Demosthenes, Philip's great adversary, who had organized the alliance of Greek *poleis*; he threw away his armor to move more quickly. Philip and the Macedonians set up a trophy on the field to commemorate their victory, and they celebrated in typical Macedonian fashion by getting very drunk. That night, an intoxicated Philip wandered the battlefield among the dead, taunting his Athenian enemy in a loud voice: "Demosthenes, son of Demosthenes of the *deme* Pionia proposes!"³

However, one of the Athenians present sobered Philip up by reminding him that Agamemnon had conquered Troy but had been assassinated only a short time later.

By his victory at Chaeronea, Philip had unified Greece. He imposed very lenient peace terms; he released all his Athenian prisoners and gave them an escort of honor back to Athens, led by his son Alexander. Philip then created the League of Corinth; Philip would be the league's president, and all the Greek states were forced to join. As members of the league, the *poleis* were free to run their own affairs, but they were ordered to stop fighting one another. He also demanded that all Greek states contribute money, soldiers, and ships for a great war of revenge to punish Persia for the attacks of 490 and 480–479 and for their constant intervention in Greek affairs beginning in 412.

The Great Adventure: The *Anabasis* of the 10,000, 401

The Persian Empire still stretched from Anatolia all the way to India. However, there had been numerous internal struggles over the throne, and numerous provinces, most notably Egypt, had been in almost constant revolt. Philip believed that a large Greek army made up mostly of his experienced Macedonian *phalanx* and cavalry could defeat a much larger Persian force even on Persian soil. Philip, of course, knew of the battles of Marathon and Platea, and he believed that the same advantages that the Greeks had

then would help him prevail. But maybe the event that did the most to inspire Philip's confidence was the famous *Anabasis* ("march up-country") of the 10,000 in 401. After the death of Darius II (r. 424–404), his two sons, Artaxerxes II (r. 404–358) and Cyrus, fought over the throne. Cyrus raised an army in Anatolia that included 10,000 Greek *hoplite* mercenaries. This army marched into the heart of the Persian Empire but in 401 was defeated at the Battle of Cunaxa. The only soldiers to survive were the still-unbeaten Greeks. The victorious Artaxerxes sent a message to them, asking that they send their officers to him to discuss their safe return back to Greece, but the Persians treacherously slew the Greek leaders. So, the Greek soldiers met in assembly, like a mobile *polis*, and decided that they would not surrender but instead would attempt to fight their way out. They began marching north, "upcountry," toward the Black Sea. In an indelible moment, as the Greeks came over a hill near the city of Trebizond, they began to yell out, "*Thalasa! Thalasa!* [The sea! The sea!]."

From there, they sailed home. Despite constant Persian attacks, almost 9,000 soldiers returned safely. Xenophon, a famous historian from Athens, participated in the *Anabasis* and wrote an account of his adventures that became a best-seller in Greece. During the anarchy of the fourth century, inspired by the *Anabasis*, many Greeks dreamed that they might someday be unified and redirect their warlike energies against the ancient Persian enemy. Philip now had the power to fulfill this great Panhellenic dream. In 337, the League of Corinth approved Philip's plan to attack Persia, and in 336 preparations for the invasion began in earnest.

Philip never realized his great dream. In 336, in front of a theater full of people who had gathered from all over his empire to celebrate his daughter's wedding and to give him a proper sendoff for the Persian expedition, Philip was assassinated by one of his seven elite *somatophylakes* (bodyguards). At the age of 20, Alexander was now Alexander III, King of Macedonia.

"MY SON, YOU ARE INVINCIBLE!": ALEXANDER THE GREAT, 336–323

The greatest military leader in ancient Greek history now ascended the Macedonian throne with the gods themselves foretelling the spectacular successes to come. He had already given a hint of his potential at Chaeronea two years earlier, but his later successes would surpass even those of his father. In 336, though, he was still unproven, and most assumed that whatever promise the future held, he could not possibly live up to the standards set by Philip. Not surprisingly, rebellions broke out all over Philip's old empire as the various tribes and the Greek *poleis* decided that a golden opportunity to regain their independence had now been dropped into their laps thanks to Philip's untimely demise.

However, Alexander quickly demonstrated his military greatness. It had taken Philip just over 20 years to conquer his empire; it would take Alexander barely one to reconquer it. In a series of lightning campaigns in

336–335, Alexander crushed the various uprisings against him, displaying a ruthlessness far beyond that of his father. In 336, he campaigned in Thessaly, quickly regaining its allegiance. In 335, he moved north against various rebellious tribes, including the Thracians, Getae, and Illyrians. These tribes were crushed, as well, as Alexander led Macedonian arms all the way to the Danube. During these campaigns, news circulated in Greece that Alexander had been killed. This, and the arrival of Persian money, sparked an uprising of Greek *poleis*, including Athens and Thebes. Alexander responded with his usual speed, marching from Upper Macedonia to Thebes in 15 days. He moved so rapidly the Thebans did not receive the news of his coming until just before he arrived outside the city. When the other Greek states heard that he was not dead and was in fact in Greece, most quickly repented; Thebes was left to fight alone. Alexander decided to make an example of Thebes; one of the greatest cities of Greek myth and of recent history was destroyed. Six thousand men were put to the sword, and 30,000 women and children were sold into slavery. All of Greece was now cowed. By the end of 335, Alexander stood where his father had once stood: in command of the greatest empire yet seen in Greek history. The next year, he would be on his way into Persia.

Alexander's Army

In 334, Alexander was ready. He had gathered together an army of nearly 50,000 men. The core of the army was Macedonian: 12,000 heavy infantry of the *phalanx* (*pezhetairoi*), armed with the *sarissa* and divided into units called *taxeis*. The six regular *taxeis* numbered 1,500 men each. The seventh was the elite infantry unit, numbering 3,000 men chosen from the strongest, tallest, and bravest of the Macedonians and known as the *agema* of the royal *hypaspistai* and later (exactly when is not known) as the *argyraspides* (Silver Shields). The remaining infantry included Greek allies serving as *hoplites*, various northern tribesmen, and mercenaries. There were also contingents of lightly armed *peltasts*, including Cretan archers, lancers, Thracian javelinmen, and Agrianians. There were roughly 6,000 cavalry, anchored by the Macedonian Companions (*hetairoi*), numbering 1,800 men. In 334, the cavalry was divided into eight squadrons (*ilai*); seven were the regular cavalry, and the eighth *ila* was the elite cavalry guard of the king (*ile basilike*), also known as the *agema* of the cavalry. Cavalry contingents were also brought from Thessaly, the allied Greek *poleis*, Paeonia, and Thrace.

Alexander's chain of command was more sophisticated than anything seen before in the Greek world and would grow even more complex as his campaigns progressed. At the top, of course, was Alexander, the king. Immediately below him was his second-in-command, Parmenio, who also commanded the infantry. Parmenio had served with Philip for years and had quickly rallied to Alexander's cause after the assassination. The second-in-command had no distinct title at this point but later would become known as the *chiliarch*. Below Parmenio were the seven *somatophylakes*, or elite bodyguards of the king. The *somatophylakes* not only protected the king but also helped

him run the army. As time went on and Alexander placed his own trusted friends in these seven positions the *somatophylakes* were elevated above the various unit commanders and took on increased military functions, often commanding contingents of the army. Next came the cavalry commanders, the first of whom was the *hipparch* in overall command. In 334, the *hipparch* was Philotas, son of Parmenio. In later years, after Philotas was executed for supposed involvement in a plot against the king, Alexander decided that he no longer was comfortable having one man in charge of the entire cavalry and hence with too much power. The cavalry would be reorganized, with a greater number of *hipparchs* to check and balance each other. Below Philotas were the eight *ilarchs*, each commanding an *ila* of cavalry. The most important of the *ilarchs* was the commander of the elite cavalry bodyguard; in 334, this was “Black” Cleitus. The infantry *taxeis* were each commanded by a *taxiarch*. Again, the elite bodyguard unit, the royal *hypaspistai*, was the most prestigious. Its commander in 334 was Nicanor, another son of Parmenio. The other six *taxiarchs* were all relatively young men in 334, but some would rise dramatically within the army and eventually have a big impact on the history of Alexander’s empire. These included Perdikkas, Craterus, and Meleager. This elaborate command structure allowed Alexander to implement the most complicated orders and to trust that they would be effectively carried out. It was also no small part of his success that he was surrounded by such a great wealth of talent, men whose names have generally been forgotten but who nevertheless played a huge role in Alexander’s ultimate triumph.

Alexander’s Great Battles: The Granicus River, 334

In the spring of 334 Alexander and his army crossed the Hellespont into Persian territory (what is now northwestern Turkey). Upon his arrival, he threw a spear into the ground, claiming all of Asia as “spear-won territory.” This was an ancient Homeric device: if you could seize something by force, it was then rightfully yours, and further justification or explanation would not be necessary. Alexander then moved on to Troy, the site of the most famous war of Greek mythology. To the Greeks, the Trojan War was, of course, a real event that had occurred roughly 800 years before Alexander’s time. Alexander was inspired by the heroes of Troy and slept with a copy of the *Iliad* under his pillow. He believed that the Macedonian royal family was descended from Achilles, and he wanted nothing less than to emulate his great ancestor. Like Achilles, he did not mind dying young if it meant lasting glory. Power and wealth were in fact not very important to Alexander; what was important was achieving such tremendous deeds that he not only would overshadow his father but, also like Achilles, would be remembered forever. He believed quite simply that in glory lay immortality—not that he would live forever but that his name and his accomplishments would live on so that people would still be writing about them more than 2,300 years later. After touring Troy and sacrificing to Achilles and the other great heroes, Alexander was ready to move on to fulfill his destiny.

The king of Persia in 334 was Darius III (r. 336–330). He had become king with the help of a corrupt minister named Bogoas, who had poisoned the previous two kings, Artaxerxes III in 338 and Artaxerxes IV in 336, paving the way for Darius's accession. When Darius took over, in 336, the same year Alexander became king in Macedonia, he executed Bogoas to prevent a repeat of history. Darius knew of Alexander's invasion but was convinced that the Macedonian did not represent much of a threat. Darius did not even bother to march out himself; instead, he ordered his *satraps* (governors) in Anatolia to deal with the invader. The Persian governors, Arsites, *satrap* of Hellespontine Phrygia, Arsamenes of Cilicia, and Spithridates of Lydia, gathered together an army of 30,000 infantry and 16,000 cavalry. This was the first of a number of mistakes made by Darius, since his *satraps* did not command the resources that he did; the first Persian army to face Alexander on Persian soil was actually numerically inferior to the Macedonian force. Also, the problems in the Persian army present at Platea 145 years before had not been rectified. Their soldiers, except for the Greek mercenary units, still did not employ *hoplite* armor. And, this was still a multinational force made up mostly of Persian subjects, including Hyrcanians, Cilicians, Paphlagonians, Bactrians, and even Greeks. Strategic disagreements made things worse; on the Persian general staff was a Greek mercenary from Rhodes named Memnon. He warned the Persians not to attack Alexander, since his numbers were superior, but instead to employ a scorched-earth policy that might starve Alexander of his supplies and money and perhaps even force him to retreat to Greece. His idea was rejected, as Aristes vowed that no Persian land would be ravaged while he was in command.

The two armies faced each other across the shallow Granicus River. Alexander's infantry attempted to cross the river but was forced back, with heavy casualties. When Alexander ordered another attack, his men hesitated. Alexander did not ask again: he charged off alone, hoping the rest of the army would follow. This rash act had the desired effect; his men, terrified at the thought of losing their commander, charged off after him. Led by their king, the Macedonians were able to push the Persians back from the eastern bank, and the infantry was able to move across. There was heavy fighting in which Alexander was nearly killed by the *satrap* Spithridates; he had moved in close and had raised a spear with which to strike the unknowing Alexander, but just at the last moment, "Black" Cleitus swooped in and hacked off Spithridates' arm. In the pitched battle that followed, the Greek *phalanx* demonstrated its superiority, and, with Alexander's courage and heroic leadership, the Macedonians won the Battle of the Granicus River, the first of three big battles they would fight against Persia.

With the victory, the Persians fled east out of Anatolia, leaving the entire region wide open to Alexander. It is here that another important factor in Alexander's ultimate success becomes apparent: propaganda. Wherever Alexander went, he announced that he was there to free the locals from the Persians. Technically, this was true, for he was trying to free them from Persia, but obviously he had no intention of setting them free. Alexander was

going to take over where Darius and the Persians had once ruled. However, Alexander was careful to keep the second part of this hidden. In 334, Alexander needed help with money and supplies, and he did not want to fight a series of costly battles against tough Anatolia peoples. The propaganda served his purpose, allowing him to march through the region generally unopposed while the locals provided the necessary matériel. It was not until much later that Macedonian rule was strictly imposed.

The Battle of Issus, 333

Darius III now realized that his *satraps* could not deal with the invader and that he would have to march out in person. He ordered all the *satrapies* of the empire to send soldiers to Babylon, and eventually he had an army of nearly 120,000 infantry, and 30,000 cavalry. From Babylon, Darius III began marching northwest looking for Alexander. Meanwhile, Alexander began marching southeast looking for Darius. The two armies actually passed each other on either side of the Amanus Mountain range so that when they finally met up, Darius's army was moving down from the north and Alexander's was moving up from the south until they met at a place called Issus.

Issus was actually an ideal location for Alexander to fight his numerically superior foe. It was a narrow plain of roughly two miles between the mountains and the Mediterranean Sea. The Persians would therefore not be able to use their superior numbers to spread out and encircle the Macedonian *phalanx*, which was nearly impossible to attack from the front but far easier to attack from the sides or from behind. Also, because of the narrowness of the plain, the Macedonians were able to keep an unbroken line facing the Persians. Alexander knew that the key to the battle was Darius: if he could kill or capture the king, the Persian army would likely fall apart. Most of the soldiers were not Persian and fought only because they were forced to do so. They were not going to stand and fight for the Persian cause if Darius was dead or captured. They fought out of fear of retribution; if there was no king, there would be no retribution, and they could safely flee or surrender. Alexander believed that his *phalanx* in the center and the cavalry on the left could hold out long enough to give his right an opportunity to get Darius.

When the battle began, the Persian cavalry on the right and the infantry in the center moved forward to the attack. Yet, despite putting tremendous pressure on the numerically inferior Macedonians, the Persians were unable to break through, and the Macedonian line held. This provided the time Alexander needed to win the battle. Alexander was on the right leading the Companion Cavalry in a charge against the weak Persian left near the foothills. Alexander and his cavalry broke through the left wing opposite to them and then wheeled westward toward the Persian center. This was the place of honor in the Persian army and where Darius stood watching the battle. Alexander and his Companions crashed into Darius's Royal Cavalry Bodyguard, made up mostly of Persian nobles. Fierce fighting erupted as the Persians fought to the death to protect their king, and Alexander even took a

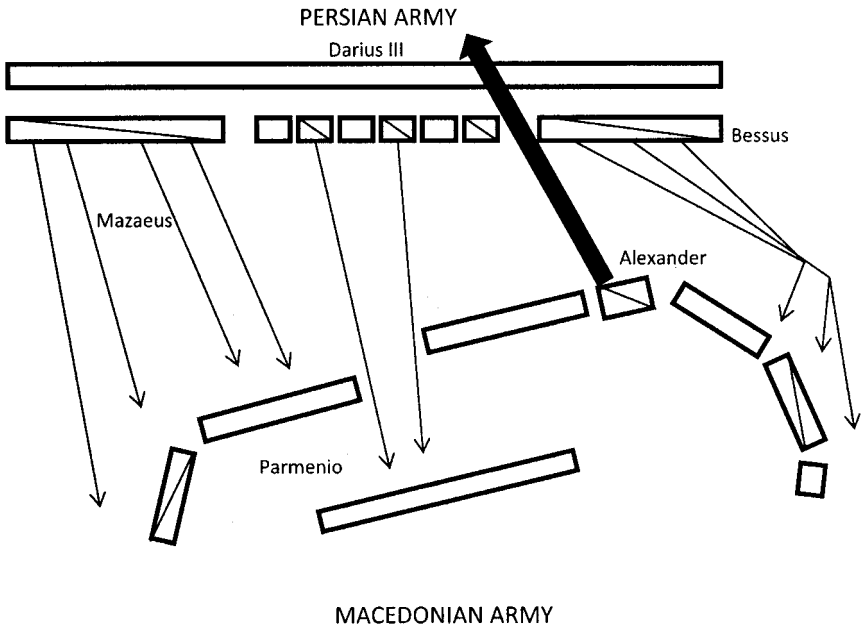
spear through the thigh. But Darius panicked; convinced his life was in danger, he rode his chariot out of the battle and fled north. With his departure, many of the other Persians abandoned the field, as well. Alexander wanted to pursue, but his center and left were now giving ground, so instead he continued westward, hitting the Persian right and center from behind. This was the decisive blow; the Persian army now collapsed as men either surrendered or joined the king in flight. Although he had been unable to capture or kill Darius, he had accomplished the next best thing. Alexander had won the second of the three great battles against Persia.

As a result of this victory, Darius and the Persians fled east, leaving the western third of the empire open to the Macedonians. Darius had left in such a hurry that he had failed to retrieve the vast treasury he had taken to Issus: 5,600 *talents* of gold and silver and other valuables. This wealth fell into Alexander's hands; he would have no more financial worries from this point on. Last, it was traditional for the Persian king to take his entire family on campaign, so when Darius fled from Issus so hastily he left behind his wife, his mother, Sisygambis, his daughters, his son, and all his concubines. When they were captured by Alexander, they expected the worst, but instead Alexander treated them, as he put it, like the royalty that they were. However, he did not let them go; they might make valuable hostages in the future.

The Battle of Gaugamela, 331

In the summer of 331, Alexander headed northeast toward Mesopotamia. He moved along the northern rim of the river plain, skirting the Armenian Mountains on his left. Though the summer temperatures had gone into triple digits, at least along the northern route the heat was bearable, and the land provided fodder and supplies for his men. After crossing the Euphrates, the Macedonian army reached the Tigris in mid-September. Darius's spies had informed him of Alexander's movements; he had believed that the Macedonians would come south along the Euphrates to fight him somewhere near Babylon. When Alexander refused to be drawn down into the blistering Mesopotamian plain, Darius and his army left Babylon and headed north, stopping at Mosul, 50 miles to the south of Alexander's Tigris River crossing. He then moved to Gaugamela, deciding that here was the optimal place for his army to use its superior numbers. It was a huge flat, wide-open plain that allowed the Persians to avoid the problems of Issus. Darius ordered his men to improve the battlefield: obstacles were removed, small hills were flattened out, and lanes were made for the Persian chariots. Alexander moved south toward the Persian positions (see Figure 5.1). On the way, a lunar eclipse occurred on the night of September 20–21, which frightened the men until Alexander's soothsayer interpreted the sign as an omen of victory: by the time of the next full moon Alexander would have defeated the Persians. On September 29, Alexander finally moved south over a short range of hills and, from there, saw the plain of Gaugamela four miles away. There was the new Persian army of

Figure 5.1
Battle of Gaugamela, 331



nearly 110,000 infantry and 40,000 cavalry. The cavalry came from the eastern *satrapies*, most notably Bactria and Parthia, and was considered the best in the empire. This was again a multinational force that included Dahae, Cadusians, Carians, Tapurians, Albanians, Armenians, Cappadocians, Scythians, Syrians, Medians, Sacae, Hyrcanians, Greeks, Indians, Mardians, Susians, Arachosians, Arians, Uxians, Babylonians, and, of course, a nucleus of Persians.

Alexander and his officers met to decide their course of action. Parmenio suggested that a night attack might be the only way to defeat an army so much larger, but Alexander replied that he would not steal a victory. Instead, after careful reconnaissance, Alexander decided on a plan of battle. He ordered his men to get some rest, and then he retired to his tent and slept so soundly he had to be woken up by his officers the next morning. Darius's men, fearful of just the sort of attack Parmenio had suggested, did not sleep but instead stood ready all through the night.

The day of the battle that would decide the fate of Persia was October 1, 331. Both kings ordered their soldiers into place, and both made the requisite speeches to their men to encourage them for the coming conflict. Darius appealed to Ahura Mazda, the ancient patron of Persia, and to the great heroes of Persia's past.

Darius ordered his men to form two parallel lines; the first forward line consisted mostly of cavalry, the rear line mostly infantry. Darius himself was in between the two lines in the center. Thanks to the space on the plain, he was able to spread out his men, rather than force them into a small, confined

area as at Issus. His lines extended far beyond those of the Macedonians, and Darius intended to use this battlefield to pull off a double envelopment 115 years before Hannibal at Cannae. Bessus on the left would lead cavalry units to either outflank or break through Alexander's right; it was hoped that this would crumple the whole wing, causing chaos, panic, and flight. Mazaeus would do the same thing on the right, attempting to outflank or break through the Macedonian left. If all went well, the fearsome Macedonian *phalanx* in the middle would not have to be attacked from the front; instead, the victorious wings could strike where it was most vulnerable: on the flank or in the rear. Under such stupendous pressure, the Macedonian army would surely collapse.

Alexander knew that, as at Issus, the key to victory was Darius. If he could kill or capture the king, his army would fall apart. The problem was how to break through 150,000 men, and especially the crack cavalry of Persia's eastern *satrapies*. On the right would be the Companion Cavalry, led by Philotas, son of Parmenio, and other cavalry units, including Greeks and Paeonians. A number of other units were kept hidden just behind the right wing as a reserve and to convince the Persians the right wing was in fact weak. Alexander, like Napoleon at Austerlitz, wanted the Persians to attack this wing thinking that here they could break through or outflank the Macedonian line. But Alexander's reserve troops would prevent the breakthrough, and they could also bend inwards toward the center and, it was hoped, prevent any outflanking maneuver. Alexander believed that the more troops, mostly cavalry troops, the Persians sent around the right trying to outflank him, the weaker their right and center would become. If all went well, gaps would appear in the Persian line, allowing Alexander to lead the decisive cavalry charge with his Companion Cavalry. The center of the Macedonian line was not parallel to the Persian line but instead was deployed diagonally or *in echelon*, tailing away from the Persians from the right to the left in a maneuver first used by Epaminondas at Leuctra in 371 and subsequently borrowed by Philip. The Macedonian center had the main core of the infantry army: the seven *taxeis* of the *hoplite phalanx* with their 18-foot-long *sarissas* bristling before them. The unit furthest to the right was the Royal Guard of the *Hypaspistai*, commanded by Nicanor, while the other *taxeis* were commanded by, in order, Coenus, Perdicas, Meleager, Polyperchon, Simmias, and Craterus. The center had two vital functions: it must hold at all costs and prevent a Persian breakthrough to provide the necessary time for Alexander on the wing to win the battle, and it was expected to be ready for a counterattack in case gaps appeared in the Persian lines. On the left wing was the rest of Alexander's cavalry, commanded by Parmenio. Its purpose was similar to that of the *phalanx* in the center: it was to fall back slowly and curl inwards if necessary but not break; it must allow Alexander time on the right.

When the battle began, Alexander and his army first began to move to the right. This was calculated; he knew Darius would not allow him to outflank the Persian army, and, as expected, Darius sent Bessus and his cavalry squadrons from the right wing to block Alexander's further movement to the

right and to either outflank or breakthrough Alexander's right wing. By veering right, Alexander had dragged some of the best Persian troops with him. Alexander was fortunate to have such an experienced army; his right wing was able to hold the line against numerically superior forces, at the same time that Parmenio on the left though buckling, was holding, as well.

Darius tried to use his scythed chariots against the Macedonians, but, as the Myceneans or the Hittites could have warned him, chariots were no longer effective. Though some Macedonians lost legs to the scythes, the charioteers and horses were decimated by arrows and javelins, and then the Macedonian lines, by prearrangement, opened up and allowed the chariots to pass harmlessly through. The chariot teams were then jumped by lightly armed troops. So, despite the great effort to clear highways for the chariots before the battle, they had no effect on the outcome.

Finally, the gaps Alexander was waiting for appeared; Bessus had moved too far to the left while the Persian center moved forward, leaving space in between the two parts of the line. With his Royal Horse Guard, the Royal *Hypaspistai*, *peltasts*, and any other stragglers he could round up, Alexander, with a great battle cry, led a charge into a gap in the Persian line that had opened up just to the left of the Persian center, meaning just to the left of Darius. Alexander and his men crashed through the Persian line, through the Greek mercenaries and through Darius's royal cavalry guard:

Alexander had sighted his adversary through the ranks of the royal squadron of cavalry. . . . Darius was a tall and handsome man and he towered conspicuously above this large and superbly equipped body of horsemen who were closely massed to guard the lofty chariot in which he stood.⁴

The end was near. Bessus was now suddenly cut off by Alexander's charge from the rest of the Persian line, and he began to retreat, relieving the pressure on the Macedonian right. Most important, Darius again panicked:

Alexander drove his wedge and raising the battle-cry pressed forward at the double straight for the point where Darius stood in his chariot. A close struggle ensued but it was over soon, for when the Macedonian horse, led by Alexander, vigorously pressed the assault, fighting hand to hand and thrusting their spears in the Persians' faces, and the infantry *phalanx* in close order and bristling with pikes added its irresistible weight, all the horrors of battle were now before Darius' eyes.⁵

Darius fled from the battlefield, abandoning his chariot and his bow. Alexander would have pursued him, but at that point, he received a message from Parmenio that the Macedonian left was crumbling. He wheeled around and led the charge back against the Persians. However, Bessus was already in retreat, and the Persian center and right led by Mazaeus, after they saw Darius flee, disengaged and retreated, as well. As expected, without Darius, the Persian army collapsed as it had at Issus. For all intents and purposes the war was over; thanks to Gaugamela, Alexander was now King of Persia.

The war came to an official end during the ensuing months. Later in October, Babylon was captured. In December, Susa and its treasury of 59,000

talents were taken. At Susa, Alexander wed Stateira, the daughter of Darius. Finally, in January 330, Alexander occupied the ancient capital of the empire: Persepolis. Alexander entered the great palace of Darius I and Xerxes, the two kings who had invaded Greece. He sat on the great throne of the Persian kings. This was a clear and symbolic finish to the long war between Greece and Persia, which had begun 210 years before when Cyrus the Great first conquered the Greeks of Ionia. A Corinthian named Demaratus, who had accompanied Alexander on his campaign, wept and exclaimed, "Any Greek who had died before that day had missed one of the greatest joys in life by not seeing Alexander seated on the throne of Darius."⁶

Greece had finally triumphed in its war with the ancient enemy. Alexander and his men had a party to celebrate, became very drunk, and burned the palace at Persepolis to the ground.

To the Ends of the Earth, 330–323

By 330 B.C.E., at the age of 25, Alexander had conquered the Persian Empire and occupied the heartland of the Persian state. However, he would not now be satisfied simply relaxing and enjoying his newfound wealth and power. He decided on new campaigns to the east. For one, Darius still lived, and while he still lived it was possible, however unlikely, that he could provide a rallying point for the Persian enemies of Alexander. Also, the geographical knowledge of the Greeks was at this time faulty: they believed the world to be much smaller than it truly is. Most notably, they believed that the world ended somewhere in India. So, because the world was so small and because he had faced no real difficulties in the past, Alexander was convinced that he could literally conquer everything. In June 330, Alexander and his army set out for the east to capture Darius and conquer all the lands as far as the great ocean.

Alexander and his army moved with incredible speed: 200 miles in 11 days, covering 18 miles a day. Darius and his followers had fled further east but Darius's men were now demoralized and no longer believed that he could possibly lead them to victory. So Bessus, the *satrap* of Bactria and a relative of Darius, put Darius under arrest and proclaimed himself the new Persian king Artaxerxes V. He would now become the center of Persian resistance. The unfortunate Darius was finally killed by Bessus in 330 B.C.E. when the pursuing Alexander had arrived nearby. Alexander stopped to give Darius a proper funeral and burial while Bessus fled into the eastern provinces. Alexander proclaimed himself the true successor to Darius and labeled Bessus a usurper. The chase continued with Bessus as the new quarry. Between 330 and 327, Alexander moved further east from Parthia through the modern Afghanistan. The fighting was extremely difficult as he faced numerous guerrilla campaigns. However, Alexander was able to gain some collaborators, both Persians and natives, and, despite difficult mountain campaigns, was never defeated. He founded a number of garrison cities that were designed to hold the new territories he conquered. These cities were usually named

Alexandria, including an Alexandria the Farthest, which he established in Afghanistan. In 328, Bessus was finally caught; his nose and his ears were cut off, and he was then executed. Alexander proclaimed that this was revenge for the death of Darius and made it clear, as he put it, that only a king could kill a king. During this time, Alexander was wounded again, taking an arrow in the leg. He also picked up another wife along the way, Roxanne, daughter of King Oxiartes, the *satrap* of Sogdiana.

In 327, Alexander crossed the Hindu Kush into India. Aristotle had taught Alexander that he would be able to see the great ocean from the Hindu Kush; the fact that he could not was the first hint that maybe there was more to Asia than previously believed. When Alexander entered India, he had with him only 15,000 infantry and 2,000 Macedonian cavalry. The rest of the soldiers had either died during the grueling campaign or had been left behind to garrison Alexander's new empire. Alexander was fortunate, though, that India at this time was not unified and instead was divided into more than a dozen independent kingdoms. The northwestern part of India had not been part of the Persian Empire since the time of Darius I but instead was ruled by independent Indian *rajahs*. When Alexander appeared, two of these *rajahs* went over to him and agreed to rule their kingdoms on his behalf. However, when Alexander pressed further east, he entered the territory of Porus, the *rajah* of the Punjab, who commanded an army of 50,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry, and 200 elephants. In May 326, the Battle of the Hydaspes River was fought. This would be the fourth and last great battle of Alexander's career, and, despite being vastly outnumbered, he was again victorious; he thus ended his career undefeated. Though Porus was beaten, Alexander admired his bravery and allowed him to rule his kingdom on Alexander's behalf.

Alexander was excited; he had met this new people in battle and had emerged victorious again. He continued to believe that the ends of the earth were close at hand and that his great dream of conquering *all* the lands of the east could be achieved. However, it was at that moment, in July 326, that his soldiers finally decided they had had enough. They had left Pella in 334 and had marched for eight years, covering more than 17,000 miles. The further east they went, the more likely that they, too, would be killed in battle or would die from other causes. To make matters worse, they had begun to receive more accurate information regarding India. They had learned that it was far bigger than previously believed and that there were hundreds of thousands of fighting men further east. Even worse, they heard rumors that India had thousands and thousands of war elephants. At the Battle of the Hydaspes, the Macedonians had come face to face with large numbers of Indian war elephants for the first time, and even though they had emerged victorious, they were so terrified by the thought of facing elephants again that they did not wish to go further. To make matters worse, it was the monsoon season, and the constant humidity and rain were something that these Mediterranean soldiers had never experienced. They wanted to go back home and enjoy their newfound wealth and fame before it was too late. Alexander tried pleading with his men, he tried yelling at his men, and he even tried

pouting in his tent. When nothing worked, he finally agreed to turn back. It could be said of Alexander that the only defeat he ever really suffered came at the hands of his own soldiers.

Alexander and his army did not take the same route back to the west. Instead, they went south down the Indus River before arriving at the Indian Ocean. From there, Alexander and his men moved directly west, toward Babylon. However, this route took them straight through the Gedrosian Desert. Alexander lost thousands of men due to lack of supplies and especially the lack of drinking water. It was not until 324 that the army finally staggered into Babylon.

Apparently, Alexander had no intention of returning to Macedonia for the time being. Instead, he intended to make Babylon the capital of his new empire. He spent the next year there (324–323), planning for new, even greater campaigns. However, Alexander was never able to lead his army out again because, in June 323, Alexander attended a party and became very ill. He was sick for a week and then, to the great shock of everyone, unexpectedly died at the age of 32.

Six

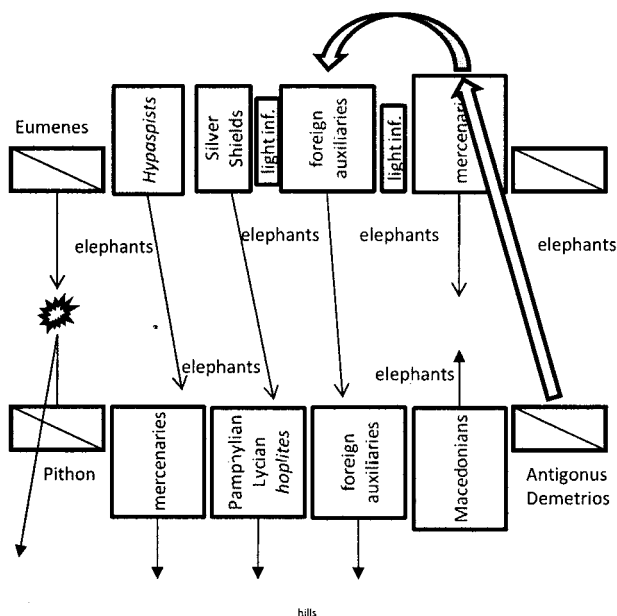
War in the Hellenistic Age, 323–276 B.C.E.

THE NEW WARFARE: THE BATTLES OF PARAITAKENE AND GABIENE, 317–316

When Alexander died, he had no obvious heir to inherit his empire. When his generals crowded around his deathbed and asked to whom he left his empire, all he said was, “The strongest”; though prophetic, this was not much help. A civil war was about to begin that ultimately would decide the question. Alexander’s generals and their descendants would fight for nearly five decades to control all or part of Alexander’s empire. During this time, the nature of Greek warfare changed significantly. Three major battles, Paraitakene (317), Gabiene (316), and Ipsus (301), demonstrated how dramatically military operations had evolved from the old Macedonian army created by Philip and perfected by Alexander, and especially from the old *polis* armies of the fifth and fourth centuries.

In the summer of 317, Antigonos Monophthalmos (“The One-Eyed”) and his army moved south from Media; Eumenes in Persia moved north toward Antigonos.¹ The armies encamped barely a mile from each other, but they were separated by a river and a ravine, which neither army wished to cross. For five days, the two armies sat tight, living off the land until the neighborhood had been exhausted. Antigonos decided on a retreat into Gabiene, which possessed unplundered territory with which to support his men. Deserters, though, went to Eumenes and told him of Antigonos’s plans to evacuate, so Eumenes decided on a ruse; he paid mercenaries in his camp to pretend to defect to Antigonos and to tell Antigonos that Eumenes was going to launch a surprise night assault against his camp. Believing the defectors, Antigonos waited for the expected attack rather than have his men begin the march toward Gabiene. Instead, it was Eumenes who got away first and moved quickly to Gabiene. Realizing he had been tricked, Antigonos chased after Eumenes with his cavalry while the rest of his army, commanded by Pithon, followed as quickly as it could. Antigonos’s cavalry eventually caught up to Eumenes on the plain of Paraitakene, and Eumenes prepared for battle.

Figure 6.1
Battle of Paraitakene and Gabiene, 317–316



Fortunately for Antigonus, the rest of his army appeared in the nick of time to form a battleline.

The two armies that fought at Paraitakene in December 317 were now highly diversified. In the past, there was the heavy infantry *phalanx*, sometimes with cavalry support on the wings. Now, there were highly specialized units on both sides of the field, including both the heavy infantry of the *phalanx* and lightly armed troops that used bows and arrows, javelins, and slings, among other weapons. There were both heavy and light cavalry. There were numerous elite units, including the veteran *argyraspides*, or “Silver Shields,” and the various cavalry guards (see Figure 6.1).

Newest of all was the incorporation of elephants into the battles of the *Epigoni*. There had been 15 elephants in the Persian army at Gaugamela, but they had played no role in the fighting. It was not until India and the Battle of the Hydaspes in 326 that the Macedonians had seen elephants in action. Drivers called *mahouts* rode the elephants into battle. Horses that had not previously trained with the elephants would not go near them. Elephants were often very difficult to control; they panicked in battle and would then either flee or trample their own men.² When Alexander was in India (327–324), he received a large number of elephants as gifts from the various princes he had conquered or who had submitted willingly. By the time he was back in Babylon in 324–323, he had a squadron of 200 elephants fully incorporated into his army. After his death, his successors did everything they could to secure elephants for their armies. The successors also imported

new elephants from India. Eumenes received 120 elephants brought from India by Eudamus, a Macedonian left there by Alexander in 324 who now returned to the west to sell his elephants to the highest bidder; Eumenes paid 200 *talents*. Antigonos had 65 elephants.

Another dramatic change was not just the diversity of unit types but the diversity of ethnic groups now fighting in the “Macedonian” armies. The Macedonian army under Philip was mostly Macedonian, with some auxiliary contingents. At Gaugamela, roughly two-thirds of Alexander’s soldiers were Macedonian or Greek. The two “Macedonian” armies fighting at Parataikene had far different ratios. According to the sources, Eumenes had 44,300 men, of whom only 7,800 were Macedonian, roughly 18 percent. Antigonos’s army of 38,600 had 9,300 Macedonians, or 24 percent. Neither army had a significant number of Greeks fighting either as allies or as mercenaries. Macedonian or Greek “patriotism” was no longer a primary motivation for these soldiers, since all the commanders were Macedonian; money was now more important. To some extent, these armies were similar to the Persian army; instead of a core of Persians controlling a large army of many different ethnic groups, it was now a core of Macedonians doing the same thing. The list of units involved in the fighting is similar to those that fought for Xerxes at Platea or Darius III at Issus and Gaugamela. In Antigonos’s army were Medians, Parthians, Tarentines, Phrygians, Lydians, Thracians, Pamphylians, and various mercenaries. Eumenes’ army included Mesopotamians, Arachosians, Paropanisadai, Thracians, and Persians.

The actual battlelines were as follows. In Eumenes’ army, Eumenes was on the right along with the elite cavalry including the *hetairoi* (Companion Cavalry) and the *agema* (guard) units. On the left were the allied and mercenary cavalry. Altogether there were 6,300 cavalry. In the center was the elite infantry, specifically the 3,000 Silver Shields, by now the best of the Macedonian infantry. Mercenaries and Persian light infantry filled out the line. In front of the line were Eumenes’ 125 elephants acting as a screen to deter enemy infantry and cavalry attacks; the elephants were protected by light infantry.

On the opposite side were the forces of Antigonos. He was on the right with his best heavy cavalry, including the elite unit of the *agema*; also on the right was Demetrios, son of Antigonos, who was later known as “Poliocertes” (Besieger of Cities), fighting in his first major battle at the age of 21.³ On the left was the light cavalry. In the center were various mercenaries, and Pamphylian and Lydian *hoplites*; next to the right wing was Antigonos’s Macedonian *phalanx*. His 65 elephants were also placed in front of his battleline.

Antigonos and Eumenes had very similar plans of battle. Both men wanted to use their heavy cavalry on the right to crash through their enemy’s weaker left wing and then move to attack the *hoplite phalanxes* in the rear, where they were most vulnerable. Antigonos ordered his left to hang back and to avoid coming to grips with Eumenes’ superior force, but it disobeyed and immediately charged forward. Antigonos’s left wing was quickly defeated and was driven west off the battlefield by Eumenes. Meanwhile

Eumenes' center, anchored by the Silver Shields, was pushing steadily forward; Antigonos's *hoplites* were unable to hold their ground against the hardened veterans and began to break and flee toward the safety of the hills. With both his left wing and his center in full retreat, defeat seemed imminent for Antigonos, until, literally at the last possible moment, he saw an opportunity. When the infantry of Eumenes in the center had moved over to the attack, it had become detached from Eumenes' left wing, opening a gap. Antigonos seized his last chance and led a charge of his heavy cavalry, which not only defeated the light cavalry on Eumenes' left wing but also made it through the gaps. Antigonos then wheeled westward to attack the *phalanx* in Eumenes' center from behind. These units, especially the Silver Shields, were veteran units, and, whereas most *hoplites* faced with an attack from the rear would have broken and fled, these units were able to simply turn around to defend against Antigonos's charge. However, Antigonos's charge saved his army because Eumenes' victorious right-wing cavalry and *phalanx* in the center were not able to follow up on their victories and destroy Antigonos's left and center. Instead, these units, granted a respite by Antigonos's charge, were able to regroup along the western hills that bordered the battlefield. Eumenes' chance for a decisive victory was lost. Darkness brought an end to the fighting. Antigonos's losses far surpassed those of Eumenes, but he and his army had survived to fight another day. Eumenes had been forced by his men to abandon the battlefield after nightfall and instead retreated to their camp where they had their supplies, property, and, most important, their wives and families. Antigonos therefore took possession of the field, despite his losses. In the traditional truce that followed, Antigonos promised to hand over Eumenes' dead on the second day after the battle. Instead, Antigonos quickly buried his own dead so that Eumenes would not learn the extent of his losses, and that night he and his army marched away from the battlefield at high speed, trying to put as much distance as possible between his army and Eumenes'. Antigonos moved to Gabiene, and, when Eumenes realized that Antigonos was gone, he buried his own dead and followed. Both armies were distributed in winter quarters to wait for the start of the campaigning season and better weather.

However, the next battle at Gabiene in 316 took place much earlier in the year than anyone expected. Antigonos realized that Eumenes' army was scattered around the province. He believed that a sudden march direct for Eumenes through difficult desert terrain in the dead of winter would catch Eumenes by surprise and without most of his troops. Antigonos ordered his men to carry the necessary food and water since they would find neither on their march, and, to conceal his movements, he ordered them not to light fires that might alert the local inhabitants, who might then inform Eumenes of the presence of a large army. Unfortunately, the January nights were so cold that Antigonos's men could not resist lighting fires to keep warm. They were indeed spotted by the locals, who informed Eumenes that a large army was coming across the plain. Eumenes was indeed caught by surprise; most of

his army was some distance away. To fool Antigonos, Eumenes constructed a camp that from a distance looked large enough to hold his whole army, and he ordered the men he had with him to light enough fires to make it appear that all his soldiers were present. The ruse worked; Antigonos believed that his maneuver had failed to surprise his enemy and that further forced marches would not be beneficial; instead, he stopped and rested his men, allowing Eumenes enough time to bring up his entire army from their various winter quarters.

The Battle of Gabiene took place in January 316. Eumenes' army numbered 36,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry, and 114 elephants. Antigonos's army, which was much reduced because of the losses at Paraitakene, now numbered 22,000 infantry, and 9,000 cavalry, more than 7,000 fewer men than he had in 317. He also had 65 elephants. Eumenes had changed his plan of battle. He wanted to ensure that Antigonos and his heavy cavalry did not snatch away his victory at literally the last minute. This time Eumenes was on the left wing with his heavy cavalry units. He decided his left would hold Antigonos's right while his *phalanx* in the center, again anchored by the incomparable Silver Shields, would win the battle by crushing Antigonos's infantry. As at Paraitakene, Eumenes would use his elephants, supported by light infantry, as a screen to protect his forces while providing the time for the *phalanx* to break the enemy line.

The battle began with the two lines of elephants meeting head-on in the middle of the battlefield, kicking up huge clouds of dust on the desert floor. This gave Antigonos an idea; on the spur of the moment, he ordered his light cavalry on his left wing to move quickly southeast and then back to the southwest, looping far beyond the eastern edge of the battlefield. Hidden by distance and dust, they were able to move far behind Eumenes' line to attack his lightly defended camp. All Eumenes' baggage and the families of his soldiers were taken back to the camp of Antigonos. Though the battle would continue, this was actually the decisive moment that would bring the war between Eumenes and Antigonos to end. Meanwhile, Antigonos's heavy cavalry on the right had maneuvered around the screen of elephants, which were not very effective once horses and men had become used to their presence. Antigonos's cavalry charged straight for the units commanded by Eumenes. Eumenes' Persian cavalry saw the dust and the oncoming cavalry and fled. Eumenes efforts to stop this flight failed; once again, Antigonos was able to get behind Eumenes' line. Eumenes' *phalanx* had again been victorious, forcing Antigonos's infantry to flee to the north. To some extent, the Battle of Paraitakene now repeated itself: Eumenes' infantry were forced to turn around and face the cavalry, which had charged from the left wing and had come up from behind after the infantry had moved forward to the attack. At the same time, Antigonos and his cavalry blocked Eumenes and his cavalry from returning to the battlefield. Again the infantry veterans were able to do this without breaking and running; the Silver Shields simply formed a square to defy all comers. This allowed Antigonos's infantry to escape. So the battle

seemingly ended in a draw, with Eumenes' infantry victorious in the center but his cavalry unable to prevent a victory by Antigonos's heavy cavalry on the right aided by his light cavalry on the left.

However, even though the battle technically was a tie, the seizure of Eumenes' camp meant that it would instead be a decisive victory for Antigonos. When the Silver Shields discovered that their baggage and their families had been captured by Antigonos, they decided they no longer wished to fight. They mutinied, a common occurrence during these wars, and placed Eumenes under arrest. They then made contact with Antigonos and agreed to join his army and hand over Eumenes in exchange for the return of their property and their families. Antigonos agreed, and Eumenes was executed, ending the war. This victory helped make Antigonos, by the end of 315, the most powerful of the Macedonian leaders; he controlled not only Anatolia and Syria but also all of the eastern *satrapies* to the borders of India.

“THE BATTLE OF THE KINGS”: IPSUS, 301

Fearing the power and ambition of Antigonos, the other Macedonian leaders joined together to stop him.⁴ In 302, they established the “Alliance of the Four Kings,” consisting of Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus.⁵ It was decided that Cassander would attempt to hold Antigonos's son Demetrios in Greece, while Lysimachus would take his army and some troops loaned by Cassander to Anatolia, Antigonos's stronghold, where he would be joined by Seleucus, who would move northwest across the Taurus Mountains. At the same time, Ptolemy would launch an attack from Egypt into Syria. If all went well, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy would converge on Anatolia, forcing Antigonos into a decisive battle. In 302, the attacks began. Lysimachus spent the better part of the year attempting to detach various regions of Anatolia from Antigonos's control. Antigonos had been at Antigoneia in northern Syria, holding a festival to commemorate the establishment of this city as his new capital. He canceled the festival and marched west with his army, confident of victory: “He boasted that he would scatter the alliance the kings had formed with a single stone and a single shout, as easily as one scares away a flock of birds.”⁶

He wished to confront Lysimachus before a junction with the other kings could be affected. Throughout 302, the two armies maneuvered around Anatolia, and Lysimachus was almost trapped at Dorylaion. A providential rainstorm provided the cover for a daring night escape north to Heraclea, where he went into winter quarters. Lysimachus had succeeded in delaying Antigonos while the army of Seleucus was mustered and had been moved into Cappadocia, where it would spend the winter. Antigonos attempted to force Seleucus back to the east by sending a small force to capture Seleucus's capital at Babylon. Though the force was successful, Seleucus remained in Cappadocia. Antigonos, realizing he would need help against Lysimachus and Seleucus in 301, recalled Demetrios from Greece. Demetrios sailed with

his army and wintered at Ephesus. By the winter of 302–301, four armies were in Anatolia awaiting the coming campaign season: Antigonos at Dorylaion, Demetrios to the west at Ephesus, Lysimachus with not only his own troops but also soldiers sent by Cassander at Heraclea, and his ally Seleucus in eastern Anatolia. Ptolemy had offered moral support but little else; his invasion of Syria ended quickly when he heard the false news that Lysimachus had been defeated. When the weather improved in the spring of 301, Lysimachus moved south to effect a junction with Seleucus along the old Persian Royal Road at Ankyra. They planned to move west and attack Antigonos's lands in Lydia, Ionia, and Phrygia to provoke a decisive battle. Demetrios joined Antigonos at Dorylaion, and their combined armies quickly moved south to block Seleucus's and Lysimachus's road to the west. The armies confronted each other on the road between Ankyra and Sardis at a place called Ipsus.

In this "Battle of the Kings," Antigonos and Demetrios had 70,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 75 elephants; they were confronted by the combined armies of Seleucus and Lysimachus, which numbered 64,000 infantry and 10,500 cavalry. Most important, they also had 480 elephants, the gift of the Indian *raj* Chandragupta Maurya to Seleucus in 305.⁷ Antigonos's army was lined up facing north, with the light cavalry on the left, the *phalanx* in the center led by Antigonos himself even though he was now 81 years old and so overweight he needed help to get on his horse, and the heavy cavalry on the right led by Demetrios. His elephants were stationed in front of both wings as screens to protect the cavalry. His line was slightly *in echelon*, a modified version of Leuctra and Gaugamela, as Antigonos wanted to keep his weaker left wing as far from the enemy as possible while his center would be used to hold the enemy infantry. Both the left and the center would, it was hoped, buy time for the heavy cavalry under Demetrios on the right wing to not only defeat the enemy left but also to wheel around and attack the enemy line from the rear. On the other side of the battlefield, the army of Seleucus and Lysimachus faced south. The heavy cavalry was on the right wing led by Lysimachus. Seleucus commanded the infantry in the center, while his 23-year-old son Antiochus commanded the cavalry on the left. Though the infantry and cavalry were roughly equal, Seleucus did have a huge numerical advantage in elephants. He used these to great effect. A screen of 100 elephants under the command of Lysimachus was placed in front of the line as protection against the enemy. The rest, under the command of Seleucus, were placed *behind* the line with the support of cavalry units. When the battle began, there was first a fierce struggle between the elephants. Meanwhile, Demetrios's heavy cavalry had maneuvered through the enemy elephant screen and had charged into the left wing of Antiochus. Antiochus's cavalry could not stop Demetrios's charge and fled northwest off the battlefield. At this moment, Demetrios was supposed to quickly wheel west and hit Seleucus's line from behind. Unfortunately, Demetrios and his men were carried away by their victory, and, rather than follow the plan, they continued right off the battlefield in an attempt to chase down and destroy the enemy left. Antiochus's panic and retreat may have been real, or it is possible that

his actions were part of a prearranged plan designed to drag Demetrios from the battlefield. Whatever the case, Demetrios and his men were now in hot pursuit, and Seleucus moved quickly to ensure that they would not return to affect the battle. The elephants and the cavalry that Seleucus had stationed behind his men now formed a line to block the return of Demetrios. The plan worked; when Demetrios and his men finally checked their pursuit of Antiochus, Seleucus's line of nearly 400 elephants and supporting cavalry prevented Demetrios's return to the battlefield. This provided the necessary time for the rest of Seleucus's men to go into action. The right, led by Lysimachus, defeated the opposing left, and the infantry in the center had come to grips with the enemy infantry. The decisive moment of the battle came when Seleucus ordered his light cavalry and archers to move quickly east and then turn back to the west in an outflanking maneuver that allowed them to attack Antigonos's infantry from the sides and from behind. This was possible only because Demetrios's cavalry was now gone, exposing the right side of the *phalanx* to attack. Antigonos and his infantry were now suddenly surrounded by Lysimachus's heavy cavalry, the enemy infantry, and the light cavalry and archers. Under this pressure, Antigonos's infantry units collapsed, either surrendering or fleeing.

Then, as great numbers of the enemy bore down on Antigonos, one of his soldiers shouted, "They are coming for you your highness," and Antigonos replied, "Of course, where else would they be going? But do not worry Demetrios will come to our rescue."⁸

To the last moment Antigonos kept looking for his son, expecting him to return to save him and to save the day. Demetrios, though, was prevented from returning, and "the enemy overwhelmed Antigonos with a cloud of javelins and he fell."⁹

Demetrios did manage to escape from the battlefield with 5,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry and, after numerous adventures, eventually ended up in Athens. With the death of Antigonos, the last hope of unifying Alexander's old empire died, as well.¹⁰ Instead, from this point on, the various leaders would be fighting to control only parts of Alexander's kingdom.

It would take 25 more years of fighting, but by 276, the final division of Alexander's old empire was complete. Where there had been one empire, there were now three Hellenistic Kingdoms. Ptolemy and his descendants ruled Egypt; Seleucus, who eliminated Lysimachus in 281, and his descendants ruled the Seleucid Empire, by far the biggest of the three; and Antigonos, the son of Demetrios, and his descendants eventually ruled in Macedonia and Greece after the demise of Cassander's line. These three kingdoms would dominate the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East for more than a century until the coming of Rome, but that is a story for the next three chapters.

Seven

The Rise of Rome, 753–264 B.C.E.

THE ROMAN REPUBLIC, 509–31

According to Roman legend, Rome was originally a monarchy. Between 753 and 509, there were seven kings; Romulus, the son of Mars, the god of war, and the city's founder, was the first, while monarchs five, six, and seven were Etruscan. The last king was L. Tarquinius Superbus, or Tarquin the Proud. He was not popular with his Roman subjects, but it was the actions of his son Sextus that finally sparked an uprising. Led by L. Junius Brutus, the Romans rose up in rebellion and drove Tarquin and his son out of the city; they vowed that they would never again allow a king to rule over them.

Finally free of Etruscan domination, the Romans installed a new type of government that was called the *Res Publica*, or Roman Republic, which was similar in some ways to a Greek *polis*. All city magistrates (with the exception of the *tribunes*) were elected by an assembly of citizens known as the Centuriate Assembly. All male citizens, regardless of wealth, were allowed to vote in the assembly. However, the system was rigged in favor of those with money: the wealthiest part of the population controlled just over 50 percent of the vote. The *cursus honorum* (political ladder of honor) included (from bottom to top) *quaestors*, *aediles*, *praetors*, and *consuls*. All served for one year without pay, and each had specific duties; the *quaestors* controlled the treasury and the *praetors* the courts, for example. The two *consuls* were the co-presidents of the Roman state.

The most important part of Rome's government was the Senate. There was no direct election to the Senate, but usually when a candidate won election to the quaestorship, the first rung on the political ladder, he then became part of the Senate for life. There was no set number of senators, though there were usually about 300 at any given time. The senators represented the wealthiest, most powerful elements of the Roman state and in many different ways controlled the Republic. All the city officials of Rome were of course senators, meaning that through the *quaestors* the Senate controlled the treasury, through the *praetors* the courts, and through the *consuls* the centuriate assembly. The Senate provided the officers and commanders of the army.

Even most of the priests of the Roman religion were senators, and they would often use religion as a way to maintain political power. Since the other city officials were in office for only one year, they were in many ways lame ducks from the beginning of their terms; therefore, these officials rarely defied the will of the Senate.

Rome's other assembly was known as the Tribal Assembly. This assembly was organized far more democratically. After 287, for any legislation to become law in Rome or for any decision to become official, most notably the decision whether to go war, it had to be approved by the Tribal Assembly. Every year 10 *tribunes* were elected by the Tribal Assembly. The *tribune* was created to be the champion of the average citizen and as such was given extensive powers. Only the *tribunes* could call the Tribal Assembly into session, only they could propose things to the people, only they or someone they designated could speak before the assembly, and only they could call for a vote. The *tribunes* also had the power of veto, which they could use to block anything done by anyone else in Rome. However, the *tribunes*, especially before 133, generally never did anything to antagonize the senators, and they rarely exercised the powers of their office to help the average citizen of Rome. Instead, the *tribunes* often helped the Senate control the Tribal Assembly, seldom proposing or passing any legislation not first authorized by the Senate.

ROMANS AND WAR

For the Roman senator, war offered an opportunity for military glory, political power, and a means to uphold the honor and dignity of his family.¹ First, a noble worked his way up the *cursus honorum* of Rome, entering the Senate along the way, and eventually, if all went well, becoming one of the two *consuls* for a given year. Making it to the top of the political ladder brought political glory to a Roman noble. However, Rome's nobles wanted to be *consul* not just for the political power but, more important, for an opportunity to win military glory. In Rome, there were no professional soldiers, no West Point or Annapolis. Instead, all Rome's officers came from the nobility, and the commander of Rome's armies was usually one of the two *consuls*. He hoped he would avoid leading his army to disaster or getting himself killed; if all went well, he would win a great military victory. The victorious general would return to Rome and celebrate a *triumph*, a military victory parade. These parades would be held on public holidays so almost everyone would be able to take off from work to attend. In the parade would be floats depicting the great battles the general had just won. Everything plundered from the enemy would be paraded through the city, including the gold, silver, armor, weapons, artwork, and anything else of value. If a commander was fortunate, he would have captured the enemy ruler or king and would then force his defeated foe to walk in the *triumph*. A commander's victorious army would also march through the city to the cheers of the people. Last but not least, the victorious general would be pulled through the city by a four-horse chariot, finally ending up on the Capitoline Hill, where he would make sacrifices to

the gods for his great victory. Maybe the best account of a *triumph* comes from Plutarch, who describes the parade for the Roman general L. Aemilius Paullus, who had won a great victory over Macedonia and its king, Perseus, in 168:

The people erected scaffolds in the forum . . . and in all other parts of the city where they could best see the show. The spectators were clad in white garments; all the temples were open and filled with garlands and perfumes. . . . This *triumph* lasted for three days. On the first, which was barely long enough, came the statues, pictures, and colossal images taken from the enemy drawn upon 250 chariots. On the second day came the finest armor of the Macedonians in a great many wagons. . . . On the third day . . . 120 oxen were led to sacrifice. . . . After his children and their attendants came King Perseus himself, clad all in black, and wearing the boots of his country and looking like one altogether stunned and deprived of reason through the greatness of his misfortunes. . . . Then came Aemilius Paullus himself, seated on a magnificently adorned chariot . . . dressed in a toga of purple interwoven with gold and holding a laurel branch [the symbol of victory] in his right hand. All his army, in like manner, with boughs of laurel in their hands divided into their units followed the chariot of their commander.²

These military accomplishments were important because they translated into political power in Rome. Specifically, nobles inherited a certain standing from their ancestors. They then added to it their own political and military glory. All of that added up to a certain amount of what the Romans called *autoritas* (authority). As noted earlier, there were roughly 300 senators at any given time. However, the number of men who actually ran the Senate was far smaller. Specifically, the men who ran the Senate were those with the most *autoritas*, meaning those who generally combined the most exalted family history and their own political and military achievements. There was so much power to be had that all of these senators saw the attainment of power as their main goal in life. War was, of course, the necessary ingredient to making a senator's dream come true. No senator wanted to make it to the top of the political ladder and find out there was no war to fight, so the senators looked out for each other making sure Rome was always fighting someone. If Rome was not already at war, they were experts at picking a fight. Therefore, during the history of the Republic, a period of almost 500 years, Rome was at war every single year except for two. This type of sustained aggression is unparalleled in human history. Most empires were conquered over a very short period of time, usually by one great leader like a Cyrus or an Alexander. Generally, once an empire is conquered, people settle down to enjoy their newfound power and wealth. The Romans were different. Because these values never changed, the senators who ran Rome continually involved the city in war after war, even when Roman security was not threatened. The Romans fought these wars until there was literally nobody left to fight and a vast empire had been conquered.

Generally, the Roman people went along with the Senate and continuously voted for war in the Tribal Assembly because the average Roman usually benefited from the expansion of the empire. First, it was traditional for Roman commanders to divide up the wealth plundered from a defeated enemy with

the soldiers who took part in the campaign. Depending on the enemy, this could be a considerable amount of money, making warfare, or at least successful warfare, very profitable. Second, the Roman Senate, especially early in the Republic, was willing to share the spoils of empire with other members of Roman society. For example, when territory was seized from defeated enemies, their land was often divided up among poor Roman citizens. Third, the collection of vast amounts of tribute from defeated enemies brought many economic benefits to Rome. Maybe most notably, after the second century B.C.E., Roman citizens paid no taxes, since there was plenty of revenue coming in from the provinces. And, finally, patriotism played a role; the Roman people enjoyed seeing their country grow more powerful at the expense of various enemies.

THE ROMAN CONQUEST OF ITALY, 509–264

It of course is one thing to want to fight year after year over the course of half a millennium and quite another to have the resources not only to fight numerous wars but also to win these wars. The Roman Senate solved this problem by combining its desire to fight with enlightened self-interest in the way it administered the lands it conquered in Italy. By 264, the Romans had conquered the peninsula south of the Po River. However, the Romans did not (generally) treat these defeated enemies as conquered subjects. Instead, the Romans developed a confederation in Italy that was a dramatic innovation in imperial administration. In Greek *poleis*, citizenship was so jealously guarded that it was impossible for the citizen body to grow larger, because what the Greeks called aliens (people from outside the *polis*) were generally never allowed to become citizens of their new *polis*. At the same time, when a *polis* conquered other *poleis*, it would never allow its defeated enemies to have any sort of citizenship rights. Sparta's treatment of the *helots* and Athens' treatment of their subjects were typical. Because the citizen body of the *polis* could not expand, the number of male citizens could not expand, and therefore the number of soldiers could not rise.

The Romans were able to solve this problem with a solution that dated back to the very early Republic. In 493, the Romans formed the Latin League as part of the Cassian Treaty. This league was a defensive alliance to protect the Latin cities, including Rome, from outside attack. Latins and Romans always had certain reciprocal rights, such as intermarriage and legal protections. In 422, the city of Gabii received full citizenship rights in Rome, and by 338 all Latin cities received full Roman citizenship, as well. What started in the local areas of Latium would eventually expand throughout Italy. Essentially, by 264, the Romans had granted roughly half of Italy either full citizenship or varying degrees of Roman citizenship, with the understanding that with good behavior these partial citizens would eventually achieve full Roman citizenship. These actions by the Romans were unprecedented in history; no imperial people had ever conquered a large empire and then turned

around and granted full and equal partnership to those peoples that they had defeated. Yet this was one of the main pillars of Roman success because these peoples, roughly half the population of Italy, were now protected by Roman law, could vote in Roman assemblies, and could hold office in Rome, meaning they could enter the Senate, become *consul*, and lead Roman armies into battle. This meant that powerful men from various Italian states were not trying to lead their own people in rebellion but instead were now active participants and beneficiaries of the Roman state. Many famous “Romans,” such as Pontius Pilate of Samnium, were actually of different ethnic origin. As time went on, these peoples stopped thinking of themselves as Umbrians or Picentines and instead began to think of themselves as Romans. This was important to Rome’s military success because all of these new citizens were obligated to serve in the Roman army. By providing citizenship to these peoples, Rome dramatically expanded its military resources, both economically and in terms of manpower. And, not only had it made its army larger, but it had filled it with willing patriotic citizens, rather than with subjects who were forced to fight, as was the case in so many other empires.

By 264 B.C.E., the other half of Italy that had been conquered by Rome had not been given any type of Roman citizenship; instead, these people were designated as Roman *socii* (allies). The *socii* were more like the typical subjects of a typical empire, since they paid taxes and contributed soldiers to Rome and were allowed to run their own internal affairs. However, these *socii* had seen fellow Italians receive Roman citizenship, and many of them believed that with good behavior they too would become Roman citizens. And, though many had to wait until 89, this would indeed happen.³ This hope made the *socii* far more loyal to Rome than the average subjects of the average empire; they were willing to stand by Rome even in times of grave crisis.

By 264 B.C.E., the Romans had established a confederacy in Italy by which everyone was expected to contribute soldiers to Rome’s armies. It is estimated that Rome had an army of more than 500,000 men, the biggest army west of India. Alexander the Great had mustered one of the largest Greek armies in history and had barely 50,000 soldiers. Not only was Rome’s army large, but it was made up of either loyal citizens or allies who hoped to become citizens.

Superior manpower reserves were vital to Roman success. Rome had a *hoplite* infantry, but so did many of the people it fought against. Rome’s cavalry was usually inferior in quality and numbers to that of many of its opponents. And, of course, the commanders of Rome’s armies were first and foremost successful politicians who had achieved their post not because of their military abilities but because of their political achievements. On many occasions, ineffective Roman commanders led their army to disaster. Rome, in fact, lost many battles. However, the Roman Senate and the Roman people never gave up; they would always keep fighting no matter what military disaster they had suffered. More important, the Romans had created a system in Italy that provided them with the manpower to keep fighting. If the Romans lost a battle, or two battles, or even more, they would simply raise

another army and try again. They would keep fighting until they won. No other state in the Mediterranean could compete with Roman determination or with Roman manpower. So, even though the Romans lost many battles, they never lost a war.

THE ROMAN LEGION

Generally, there were three major stages in the development of Rome's army: the early *phalanx* period, the *manipular* army, and the post-Marian army, which was established during the consulships of C. Marius (107, 104–100).

As noted before, the early Roman Republic was greatly affected by the example of the Greek *polis*. This was true not only in the political realm but also in the military. Only citizens served in the army, and specifically only citizens who could afford to arm themselves as *hoplites*. The early Republic did not provide pay or equipment for the men. Like the Greek *hoplites* discussed in detail earlier, Rome's early soldiers were armed with iron armor and iron weapons, which included both a spear and a sword. The soldiers would fight in the familiar *phalanx* formation. Most of the soldiers were farmers who owned property sufficient to qualify them for military service. Rome's early wars were fought in the vicinity of Rome itself, so these farmer-soldiers would fall in for a few months of military service each summer before returning to their fields. By 400, the Roman army numbered roughly 6,000 men, making it bigger than most Greek armies of the period. From earliest times the largest unit of the Roman army was called the legion, which derived from the Roman term *legio* (levy). Later in the Republic, each legion was distinguished by its own Roman numeral.

At some point around 400, changes were implemented. First of all, pay for military service was introduced during the siege of Veii (406–396 B.C.E.). Second, the Romans replaced the *phalanx* with the more flexible system of *maniples*. Rather than have one solid *phalanx* on the battleline, the legion would now consist of three separate lines called (from front to back) *hastati*, *principes*, and *triarii*, arranged on the battlefield in what was called the *triplex acies*. Soldiers were assigned to a particular line on the basis of their age and experience: the youngest, least experienced men were at the front, and the older veterans were assigned to the rear. Their experience and calm under fire would keep the men in front of them steady and prevent them from breaking and running. The legion would now be divided into 30 *maniples*, 10 each for the *hastati*, *principes*, and *triarii*. The two forward lines had *maniples* of 120 men, and the *triarii* in the rear would have 60 soldiers in each *maniple*. The *maniples* were arranged in a checkerboard formation. The front line had gaps between each *maniple*; these gaps would then be covered by the *maniples* of the *principes* in the second line, which would also have gaps that would be covered by the *maniples* of the *triarii*. Apparently, the Romans made these changes to give greater flexibility than was possible with the *phalanx*, to provide what were essentially reserve units of veteran soldiers that could move in to cover any breach in the frontline and to allow

for relays by which tired soldiers in the front line could be relieved efficiently by those from behind. Generally, they were equipped with the same type of armor, which was similar to that of the Greeks: helmet with various types of plumes, breastplate, and grieves of some sort. However, the Romans did adopt or develop some other implements of war that became very important during this middle period. First was the *scutum*, the distinctive, large oval shield. Second was the *pilum*, the Roman javelin, made of wood and iron. There may have been a connection between the change to a *manipular* legion and this new javelin, both introduced about 400 B.C.E., since the new formation provided the necessary room for a Roman infantryman to throw the *pilum* at the enemy. The *pilum* was designed to penetrate armor and, at the very least, even if it did not wound an enemy soldier, to stick to the enemy's armor or shield, either weighing him down or forcing him to discard part of his defenses. Later, the *gladius*, the new Roman sword, was introduced. This weapon was also known as the "Spanish" sword and may have been copied from swords used by Iberian soldiers whom Rome faced for the first time during the third century. The *gladius* replaced the long thrusting spear that had been the main weapon of the Greek and early Roman *hoplites*. The sword was short, less than two feet long, and its sharp edges were used to slice through armor and flesh. Generally, for the rest of the Republic, Roman soldiers would advance toward the enemy, hurl their *pila* with devastating effect, and then close with their short swords. One other unit was part of the Roman infantry: the *velites*, or light infantry. The *velites* were recruited from Rome's poorer classes, who could not afford the full infantry panoply. They were armed with a smaller, round shield and used weapons such as javelins. Altogether, there were 3,000 of the heavy infantry and 1,200 of the light infantry, for a total legionary strength, at least on paper, of 4,200 men.⁴

The last unit of the army was the *equites* (cavalry). The cavalry was made up of the wealthiest Roman citizens, who could afford not only their own weapons but also a horse. There were 300 *equites* assigned to each legion, and they were split into 10 units of 30, called *turmae*.

In addition to the Roman troops, there were also substantial numbers of *socii* serving in the army. Paired with each legion in the army would be an *ala* (unit) of *socii*. The same number of soldiers served in the legion and the *ala*, though the allies provided a much larger cavalry contingent, which numbered nearly 1,000. Usually, in a Roman line of battle, two Roman legions would hold the center, while one *ala* would be on the right and one on the left. An allied unit was commanded by a Roman *praefectus sociorum* (prefect of the allies). The allies therefore participated in all Roman campaigns and militarily were at least half-responsible for the conquest of the Roman Empire.

Generally, there was little change in the military hierarchy from the fourth century on. The commander of a Roman army was a magistrate invested with the *imperium* (usually) by the Senate. In most cases, one of the two *consuls* would be given command of the army, though technically any senator, or even a nonsenator in unusual circumstances, was eligible. *Praetors*, especially later in the republic, commanded Roman armies, as, on rare occasions, did private citizens, such as P. Cornelius Scipio (cos. 205, 194) in Spain

in 210–206 or Cn. Pompeius Magnus (cos. 70, 55, 52), who led armies during the 80s and the 70s despite never having been in the Senate. Immediately below the commander was his officer staff. The *quaestor*, an elected official, was chosen by the commander. The *quaestors* had very specific, mostly financial duties within the camp. They were in charge of the *quaestorium* and controlled pay, food, armor, clothing, and other supplies. They were also in charge of the plunder taken from the enemy, which was destined for the commander's pockets or for the treasury in Rome. On some occasions, *quaestors* were put in charge of legions in battle.

Just below the *quaestor* were the *legates*. These were either official *legates* who were appointed by the Senate or unofficial *legates* appointed by the commander. They were usually, but not always, experienced men brought along as military advisers. It appears that originally a *consul* had three *legates*, though by the first century the normal number appears to have been five. In some extraordinary cases, the number was higher. Pompeius had 25 in the east in 67, and Caesar later had 10 in Gaul (58–50). Unlike the *quaestors*, the *legates* had no set duties but instead carried out any assignment given by the commander. They could levy troops, administer camps, or even lead legions into battle.

Following the *quaestor* and *legates* in rank were the military *tribunes*. These officers could either be elected by the people or selected by the commander, often for political reasons or for reasons of family or friendship. The typical legion had six military *tribunes* who were responsible for that particular legion. Like the *legates*, their duties varied. They were sometimes in command of groups of cohorts in battle. They superintended the building of the camp and administered the various oaths to the men. The military *tribunes* were also responsible for camp justice and heard the grievances of their legions at the tribunal in the camp forum.

The cavalry was commanded by *decurions*, three for each *turma*. Even after the disappearance of Roman cavalry, *decurions* continued to command the foreign auxiliary units that took their place.

There was a definite division between the officers and the men they led. This division was based on social background, education, wealth, and accommodations and luxuries within the camp. A military *tribune* under Caesar's command supposedly needed a whole transport ship just to carry his own belongings from Italy to Africa. There were dramatic divisions in both labor and the spoils of victory. For example, a military *tribune* could expect as much as 120 times what the average soldier received. These divisions could sometimes lead to difficulties between the general and officers and those under their command.

Next were the *centurions*, described as the backbone of the army and considered to be the best soldiers in the *maniple*. They were experienced and talented professional soldiers. They were promoted from the ranks on the basis not of their social standing or family relationships but (usually) of their bravery and ability. They were rewarded with a large tent and far more pay and plunder than the average soldier received. They enjoyed tremendous

prestige with the common soldier because they had similar backgrounds and unlike many military *tribunes*, *legates*, and even commanders, the *centurions* had earned their positions. They had influence not just with those under them but also with their superiors. The typical legion had 60 *centuries*, 6 per cohort. There was a definite hierarchy among them; the six *centurions* of the cohort were ranked, with the highest running the first *century* and possibly the cohort itself. The competition to rise within the ranks of the *centurionate* was fierce, as demonstrated by the rivalry between T. Pullo and L. Vorenus in Caesar's army. The top *centurions* from the legion's 10 cohorts were called the *primi ordines*. The ranking *centurion* among the *primi ordines* was the *primus pilus*, who was the leading *centurion* of the entire legion.

It was the duty of the *centurions* to command the 80 men in their *century*. They were responsible for enforcing orders. When necessary, they informed the military *tribunes* of problems that required investigation or punishment. In short, they were responsible for discipline at the lowest level of the camp and were vital for the commander's control of the men.

The importance of the *centurion* can readily be seen in the works of Caesar. He stated that the loyalty of the *centurions*, especially during the Civil War, was essential to his success. He knew not just the names of individual *centurions* but also their military history, and he knew how many *centurions* had died in particular battles, even in the army of his enemies.

Immediately below the *centurions* were the three *principales*: the *optio*, *signifier*, and *tesserarius*. Below that may have been another rank known as the *immunes*. Last but not least, the bulk of the army consisted of the *miles* (common soldiers). These men were usually of humble origins who were conscripted or who volunteered, mostly from the rural areas of Italy. Soldiers came from Cisalpina, Etruria, Picenum, Umbria, the Sabine country, Campania, Samnium, Lucania, Apulia, and Bruttium, from among the Marsi, Paeligni, and the Marrucini. Almost all of the regions of Roman Italy were represented in republican armies.

Each soldier was part of a *century*, which numbered 80 men. The *century* as a whole was a soldier's first loyalty, the group with which he fought, marched, and lived. In fact, he had almost a religious connection to his *century*. The Roman soldier was also part of a smaller unit, the *contubernium*. The *contubernium* was a group of eight men who shared a tent and messed together.

Once a citizen had been conscripted or volunteered, he would take an oath called the *sacramentum*, officially making him a soldier in the Roman army. The soldier was subjected to the harsh disciplinary system administered by the *centurions* and military *tribunes*. Punishments included fines, floggings, the withholding of goods, and execution, sometimes by stoning. These punishments were inflicted for a variety of crimes, including theft, giving false evidence, failure to keep guard, cowardice in battle, desertion, and homosexuality. Other punishments included having a hand cut off and being scourged and then sold into slavery; there were less violent remedies, including being forced to stand barefoot in an ungirt toga in the center of

the camp. Commanders on extreme occasions employed decimation (where every tenth man in the army chosen by lot would be executed) to punish unsuccessful troops. It has been argued that this discipline set the Romans apart from other armies of the period and helps to explain the success of the Roman army.

However, though the discipline was indeed harsh, the Roman soldier was a Roman citizen. As a citizen, he inherited a long tradition of independent thought and action. He was conscious of his rights and sometimes exhibited a high degree of freedom. This often had an impact on the citizen-soldier's relationship with his officers and commander.

There were numerous official and unofficial units present in the Roman army. There were the specialty units, such as the *exploratores* (scouts) and the *fabri* (engineers), and the personal units attached to the commander, including the *singulares* (staff), *scribae* (clerks, secretaries, scribes), *accensi* (attendants), and *familiam* (household servants and slaves).

There were also elite bodyguard and combat units. According to legend, Roman commanders had these units dating all the way back to the city's foundation, specifically the 300 *Celeres* kept by Romulus as his bodyguard. First of all, there were the 12 *lictors* that were provided by the state to enhance the dignity of the commander. There was also the *evocati*, soldiers who had served their required tour of duty but then returned to the army as volunteers as a favor to a general. There was the *extraordinarii*, representing the best of the *socii*, Rome's Italian allies; they were picked troops numbering one-third of the cavalry, usually about 300–600 men, and one-fifth of the infantry, usually about 850–1,000 soldiers. From among the *extraordinarii*, another, smaller elite unit of cavalry and infantry was chosen. This represented the best of the best of the Italian allies. These two units, the *evocati* and the picked men from among the *extraordinarii*, provided the general's bodyguard during the early and middle Republic. They were encamped near the general's tent and were constantly near the *consul*, not only in camp but also on the march. Not only were these men there to protect the general, but they were also used to increase the dignity of his office. The *extraordinarii* also fulfilled important functions in battle. They were an elite unit fighting alongside the other, regular forces, and they provided a commander's strategic reserve.

Later, new units appeared, including cavalry units from Gaul, Germany, Spain, and elsewhere, acting as bodyguards. The officers in charge of these units were usually Roman prefects, though on some occasions native officers led their own troops. Another unit was the *cohors praetoria*, better known as the Praetorian Guard. Though the date of the Guard's formation is not known for certain, like the *extraordinarii* its members were picked from the soldiers with the best physiques, the best character, and the most experience. Like the *evocati* and the cavalry, the Praetorian Guard was also immune from fatigue duties and received increased pay. These units also provided a strategic reserve or fought in the battle line. The Praetorian and other guard units were also a last line of defense within the camp when the

command structure disintegrated. There were so many civil wars and so many mutinies during the late Republic that the *cohors praetoria* and similar units were necessary to a commander's control of a camp and for his own protection. Security duties were actually spread out among a number of distinctive units, and the multiplicity of units may at first glance seem to be unwieldy. However, this was typical of the Romans, as the numerous units provided increased security for a commander. Their very separation meant that even if one unit or one unit commander became disloyal, a number of other units would still be present to protect the general.

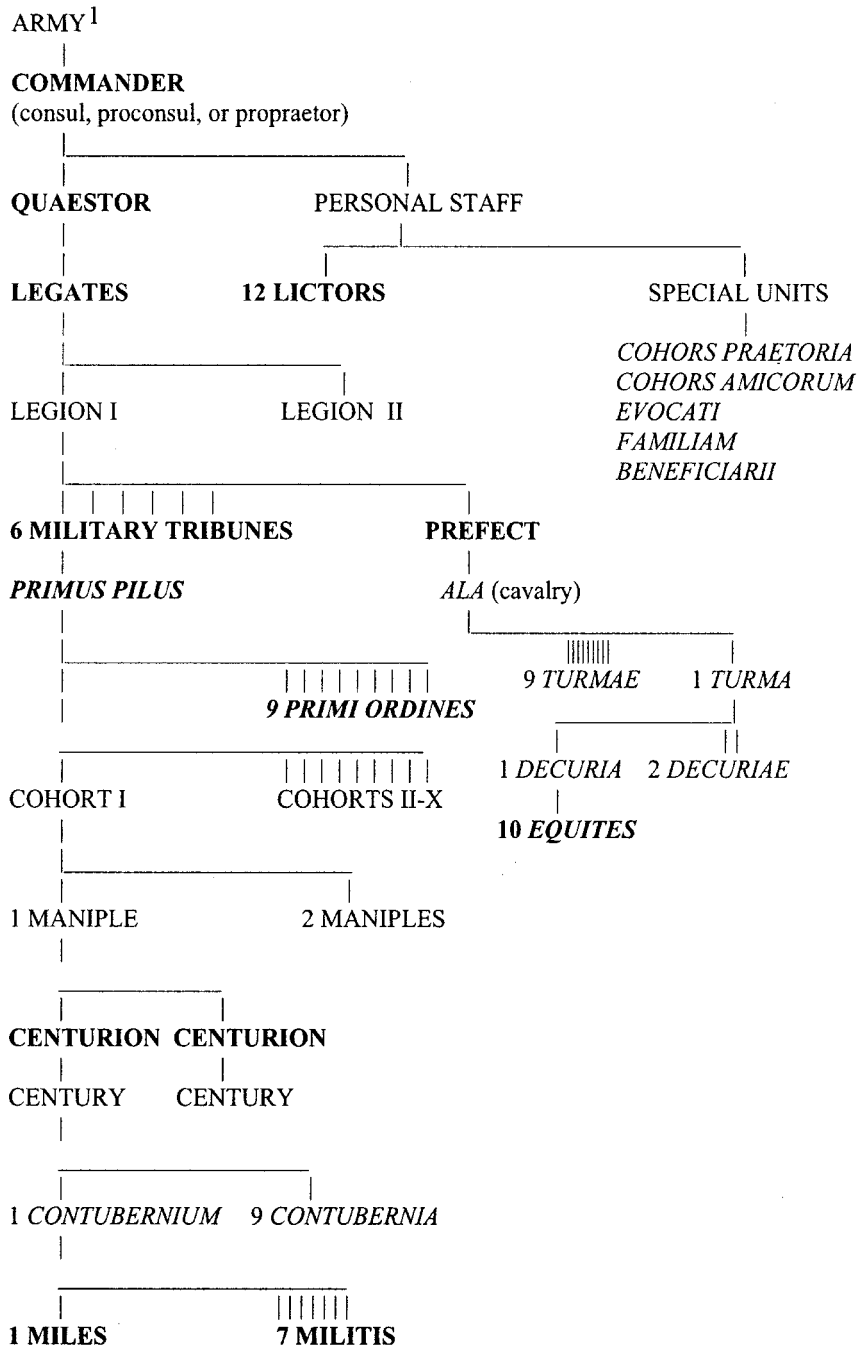
Chain of Command

The commander made the important decisions, though in some instances, especially during times of crisis, he did not make these decisions alone but was advised by his *consilium*. The *consilium* was usually held in the *praetorium* (the center of a Roman camp) and provided either a forum for a commander to relay his orders to his subordinates or a forum for discussion. The composition and size of the *consilium* was determined by the commander. The *legates*, military *tribunes*, *quaestors*, and *praefecti* were usually included. The *primus pilus* was also included, though the commander could call the *primi ordines* or all the *centurions* if he wished. If called, the *centurions* were allowed to join the debate, and their opinions, especially those of the *primi ordines* and the *primus pilus*, were highly valued (see Figure 7.1).

Once a decision had been made, it was relayed to the rest of the army. There were different ways to do this. One was to issue orders at the *consilium* to subordinate officers, either the military *tribunes* or the *centurions*, to pass on to their men. Caesar once called a *consilium* to explain why he was taking the actions he was and upon what intelligence his information was based. He then gave very specific, detailed orders to his officers on how the march was to proceed. This information was relayed to the men, along with words of encouragement and promises of monetary incentives from their general.

The commander could even call a *contio* (a camp assembly) to speak to the men. In a typical *contio*, a trumpeter would sound the signal for assembly and the soldiers would gather in battle order in the camp forum. The men were unarmed, to cut down on the noise from clanging armor and weapons. The commander then mounted the raised tribunal between the *praetorium* and the camp forum. Sometimes he was accompanied by his officers; on other occasions he was alone. The herald would call for silence, and the commander could then speak on any matter concerning the army. A commander could explain the military situation in an effort to convince his men to follow him. The information upon which the commander was making his decisions could be relayed to the men, as well. The *contio* could serve as an opportunity to offer encouragement to the men, to exhort them to achieve great things in battle. The commander could reward his men for previous bravery, or he could scold them for poor performances, depending on the situation. He could punish men for previous transgressions. At the *contio*

Figure 7.1
The Roman Republican Army



the commander could beg, plead, cry, tear his clothes, or even jump into the crowd. He could try to cow the men with threats. Last, a commander could issue orders directly to the men at the *contio*.

Sometimes, the chain of command worked differently. Each morning the military *tribunes* would meet in the *praetorium* with the commander. He would then issue orders that he had decided upon alone or with the help of his *consilium*. The military *tribunes* relayed the orders to the *primi pili* of their legion. The *primus pilus* relayed them to the *primi ordines* from the 10 cohorts of his legion. The *primi ordines* would meet with their subordinate *centurions* in the cohort and pass on the instructions. Finally, each *centurion* convened his *century* in the open space outside their tents and told the 80 soldiers exactly what they had to do. It was up to this *centurion* to see that the orders were executed at the lowest level of camp. In other cases, orders were passed along the line during marches or even before impending battles. Sometimes a general would send out messengers to relay orders while he remained in his tent.

The chain of command worked both ways. Not only did it provide a mechanism to disseminate orders, but it also gave the commander a network that could bring him information. The military *tribunes* and *centurions* were important elements in this network because they were in close contact with the men. This allowed them some insight into the soldiers' mood. Also military *tribunes* and *centurions* sometimes acted as representatives of the men to bring their grievances to a commander's attention.

The Roman Camp

While on campaign, the Romans were very meticulous about building their camps. The site for the camp was chosen by a military *tribune* and *centurions* specially trained for the job. A white flag was used to mark the *praetorium* at a high point from which the rest of the camp was measured out. Walls, ditches, and wood ramparts were constructed to protect the perimeter of the camp. The *praetorium* itself formed a square of varying size at the camp's center. The commander's tent was here. The *consilium* met here. The *aedes* (the camp shrine) and the *signa* were also housed here, making the *praetorium* not just the geographical and functional center of the camp but also the religious heart of the camp.

Adjacent to the *praetorium* was the camp forum. It was here that the elevated tribunal stood from which commanders would speak to their men at military *contiones*. It was also where parades to decorate men would take place and where military *tribunes* administered camp justice. Next to the camp forum was the *quaestorium*, which, as its name implies, was the headquarters of the *quaestor*. That was the location of the camp market and the place where pay and other goods were distributed. The overall size of the *principia*, which encompassed the *praetorium*, forum, and *quaestorium*, varied depending on the size of the camp and the military situation. Consistently, the *principia* always formed the center, or north-south axis, of

the Roman camp. It should also be noted that it was in these areas that the officers, military *tribunes*, *legates*, and other members of the commander's staff pitched their tents. The officers enjoyed far larger and more luxurious tents than the common soldier.

The camp was divided by two parallel roads, the *via principalis* and the *via quintana*. These roads ran perpendicular to the *praetorium*, or from east to west, from one end of the camp to the other. These two major roads were bisected by many smaller roads that subdivided the camp into rectangular grids. Within these grids were the tents of the soldiers. Specifically, each *maniple* formed a square or rectangle. Its size varied with the size and shape of the camp and the position of the *maniple* within the camp. Some measured as much as 200 feet by 300 feet, but others were as small as 100 by 200 feet. On two parallel sides of the square, facing each other, a *century* pitched its tents. Each *century* consisted of 80 men divided into 10 tents, 8 men to a tent. These 8 men formed a *contubernium*, which meant they ate together as well as shared living space. Their tents measured 8 feet by 10 feet (80 square feet), or about 10 square feet per man. There was little head room, since the tent was only about four feet high in the center and less on the sides. The last tent on the end of the row was the tent of the *centurion*, which, befitting his status, was larger than the tents of the average soldiers. The third side of the square was reserved for the animals, supplies, and other gear of the *maniple*. The fourth side opened onto one of the streets. In the center of the square was an open space shared by the *maniple*. Since there was so little room inside the tents, the men spent much of their time in this open space.

It has long been recognized that all Roman camps were not exactly alike. A number of factors could alter the size and shape of a camp. The size of the army obviously affected the size of the camp. Terrain and circumstances were also major factors. A parcel of land had to be found that could accommodate the whole army. The Romans, like the Greeks, often encamped on hills that provided natural protection, especially when near an enemy. Rivers were often utilized for the camp's defense. The military situation played a role, as well.

Another factor in a camp's construction was the duration it would be occupied. There were three types of camps. The first was the marching camp, which would be used only for a brief time. The second was the "permanent" camp. This camp was occupied for long periods, usually during winter. The third type of camp was built specifically for sieges; these were spread around the circumference of siege works.

Conditions were not ideal. The soldiers had little protection from the elements, even in the permanent camps. In winter, they were exposed to rain, mud, frost, and snow, conditions that often killed more men than combat. In summer, there was little defense against the heat. Sanitary conditions were poor and contributed to the difficult environment. Food supplies, especially during winter, were difficult to maintain. Also, living space for the average soldier was minimal, especially compared to the large and luxurious living quarters used by the officers. Living space was further confined if the terrain did not permit a large camp.

Roman camps provided excellent defense against enemy attack, even against overwhelming enemy attack. A Roman army could hold out for long periods inside the walls and could usually not be forced to come out and give battle in unfavorable conditions. The camp could also be used as a sanctuary for Roman soldiers defeated in battle, and it provided a refuge in enemy country. Not only was the camp protected by the hastily built ramparts and trenches, but Roman artillery was highly effective in keeping enemy armies at bay. The most important artillery piece was the *scorpion*, which could accurately fire two or three bolts per minute. These weapons were crucial to the effectiveness of a camp's defenses and to the security it provided.

Eight

Rome's March to Empire, 264–146 B.C.E.

PROLOGUE: THE LEGION AGAINST THE PHALANX IN THE PYRRHIC WAR, 280–275

Once the conquest of Italy had been completed, Rome began to expand overseas to create its great empire. However, there was one war, fought in Italy, that provided a foreshadowing of things to come. In 280, King Pyrrhus of Epirus landed in Italy. For the first time, Rome would face a Hellenistic monarch and a Hellenistic army; for the first time, the Roman legion would fight the *phalanx*.

Pyrrhus was born in 319 and became king of the Molossians by 312. Once old enough, he used Molossia as a base to create the much larger Kingdom of Epirus on the west coast of Greece. He became a minor player in the wars of Alexander's successors, fighting both Demetrios Poliocertes and Lysimachus and marrying a daughter of Ptolemy I. Meanwhile, Rome's expansion into southern Italy brought it into conflict with the Greeks of the region, most notably Tarentum. Tarentum and the other Greek city-states feared Rome's encroaching power and appealed to Pyrrhus for military support. Pyrrhus may have hoped to conquer a large empire in the west as his relative Alexander had done in the east. He may have believed that fighting "barbarians" in the west would be far easier than dealing with his fellow Hellenistic kings in the east, and he also may have liked the notion of leading and defending a great Greek coalition against the "barbarian" Roman aggressor. In 280, he landed in Italy with 25,000 infantry, 3,000 cavalry, and 20 elephants. P. Valerius Laevinus (cos. 280)¹ led a consular army of two legions plus allied contingents numbering just under 25,000 men. At Heraclea, for the first time, the Roman legion fought a professional, Hellenistic army modeled on that of Alexander and his successors. Supposedly, Pyrrhus was impressed by what he saw of the Romans: "They may be barbarians, but there is nothing barbarous about their discipline."²

Pyrrhus, leading his heavy infantry *phalanx* in person, used it to hold the Roman infantry in the center, while on the wings his cavalry, supported by elephants, drove away the Roman cavalry. This was the first time the Romans

had ever faced elephants in battle, and they were unable to resist. The Romans lost 7,000 men, but the *consul* and the survivors were able to escape. Pyrrhus also suffered significant losses totaling more than 4,000 men. Pyrrhus decided to offer peace terms; Tarentum and southern Italy were to be left alone, he would release all prisoners without ransom, and he would become a friend and military ally of Rome. Many senators wished to accept these terms rather than face another battle that, if lost, might cause further defections in the Roman confederacy. However, before the peace terms were accepted, a famous old Roman made his last appearance in the Senate. His name was Ap. Claudius Caecus (cos. 307, 296), and he had accomplished many things during his career; he had won military victories against the Etruscans and Sabelli, and he had built both Rome's first aqueduct, the *Aqua Appia*, and Rome's first great highway, the *Via Appia*, stretching from the capital to Capua. Now old and blind, he no longer attended the Senate, but when he heard it was ready to make peace, he had his slaves carry him to the Senate house. He then lambasted his colleagues for discussing peace with Pyrrhus:

Until now, fellow senators, I had been upset over my loss of sight, but now I wish I had lost my hearing as well when I learned of the shameful motions and decrees with which you propose to dishonor the great name of Rome. What has become of the boast that if the great Alexander had invaded Italy . . . he would not now be celebrated as invincible, but would either have fled or fallen leaving Rome more glorious than ever? This was empty boasting since you . . . tremble before this Pyrrhus who has spent most of his life dancing attendance on one or another of Alexander's bodyguards.³

Caecus convinced the Senate that no peace could ever be made with a foreign enemy still on Roman soil. Thus, the war continued, and another battle was fought in 279 against Pyrrhus at Asculum by the combined armies of the two *consuls*, P. Sulpicius Saverrio and P. Decius Mus. It was a hard-fought battle, again won by Pyrrhus, but again he suffered heavy losses (3,500 to the Romans' 6,000). Supposedly, after losing so many men in the two battles, Pyrrhus exclaimed, "One more victory like this and I will be finished!"⁴

Pyrrhus, despite his two victories, had been unable to win decisively and to force the Romans to surrender. Apparently tiring of the difficult campaign, he responded to an appeal of Syracuse to aid that city against the Carthaginians in Sicily. So, in 278, Pyrrhus and his army, now much reduced in numbers, packed up and left Italy. He remained on the island for two years but achieved little, and in 276 he returned to Italy at the request of his southern Italian allies. In 275, he fought a third battle against the Romans, at Malventum. On this occasion, the Romans, led by M'. Curius Dentatus (cos. 275), emerged victorious. Pyrrhus had now lost so many men in Italy and Sicily that he was forced to return to Greece. He would die in 272 during an attack on Argos when an old lady on a rooftop dropped a tile on his head.

The Romans had defeated a Hellenistic king, and the Roman legion proved more than capable of holding its own against a professional Hellenistic army, consisting of the heavy Macedonian *phalanx*, the cavalry, and

an elephant corps and led by an exceptional commander. This would bode ill for the Greeks in future conflicts with the Romans. The Roman reserves of manpower proved decisive; they lost two battles yet continued to fight, and Pyrrhus lost one battle and was forced to leave Italy. This scenario would be replayed again and again during future wars with other Mediterranean powers. The determination to never surrender, embodied by old Caecus, had brought Rome all of Italy and would serve it well as it expanded beyond the peninsula. Rome was no longer simply a “barbarian” state; with its victory over Pyrrhus, the other great powers of the east suddenly took notice of the growing power in the west. In 273, Ptolemy II (r. 282–246) became the first eastern monarch to become a “friend” of the Roman people. The Romans had finally arrived on the Mediterranean stage.

THE EMPIRE OF CARTHAGE AND THE FIRST PUNIC WAR, 264–241

The remainder of chapter 9 discusses the wars Rome fought against the Carthaginians in the west and the Greeks in the east to demonstrate how the various armies and navies actually functioned in combat in some of the greatest struggles of antiquity. The story begins in 264. At that time, there were five great powers in the Mediterranean world: Rome, which now controlled most of Italy; the three Hellenistic kingdoms in the east established by the successors of Alexander (Macedonia, the Seleucid Empire, and Ptolemaic Egypt); and the empire of Carthage.⁵

Carthage was founded about 814 B.C.E. by Phoenicians. The city eventually conquered an empire, including extensive territory in North Africa east as far as the borders of Egypt, west past the Pillars of Hercules, and south to the Sahara Desert. The Carthaginians also conquered Corsica, Sardinia, the Balearic Islands, a small part of southern Spain, and the western half of Sicily, for which they had spent centuries dueling with the Greeks on the eastern part of the island.

The wealth of Carthage was based on trade. The revenues generated from this trade were staggering; at its height the Carthaginians collected 12,000 *talents* a year. These revenues provided Carthage with the necessary resources to build the greatest navy the Mediterranean had yet seen, numbering 350 *quinqueremes* and superior to any of the fleets of the Hellenistic east. The wealth of Carthage also paid for the construction of two *cothons* (man-made harbors); one was a commercial harbor, the other a military harbor. It also financed the building of elaborate fortifications to protect the city itself. A wall running 22 miles surrounded the entire city, even along the sea.

Though Carthage was a city-state, similar politically to Rome and Greek *poleis*, it did deviate in respect to its military. After 339, except in rare emergencies, Carthaginian citizens no longer served in the army for two reasons: Carthage's citizen body was too small to expand and defend the great empire it now possessed, and the wealth of Carthage provided the funds necessary

to hire mercenary soldiers from literally all over the Mediterranean world. These mercenaries, along with allies and subjects of the empire, included Libyans, Gauls, Iberians from Spain, Ligurians, Greeks, Numidians (who provided an incomparable light cavalry), and slingers from the Balearic Islands, just to name a few. These soldiers fought in their own units and in some ways were more effective than citizen militias. They were generally professionals who spent most of their time training or fighting, and each group fought in its own unique way. There was also an elephant corps, which was used to great effect in a number of famous battles. The Carthaginians used African “Forest” elephants, whereas the peoples of the subcontinent used the larger Indian elephants. The officers of this army were always Carthaginians, elected by the government. Under the right commander, the disparate elements of this multinational army could be welded into an effective fighting force, as was true under Hamilcar Barca during the First Punic War and under his son Hannibal (247–183) during the Second. However, having mercenaries or subjects rather than citizens bearing the brunt of military service could sometimes be very dangerous, especially if the soldiers were not paid promptly. There were numerous mutinies in Carthaginian armies; maybe the most famous example was the Mercenary or Truceless War (240–237), which broke out immediately after the first conflict with Rome had ended.

The First Punic War between Rome and Carthage would be, in many ways, the greatest struggle in antiquity. Polybius (200–118), a Greek historian, summed up the struggle:

The war lasted continuously for twenty-three years and was the longest and greatest continuous war of which we have knowledge. . . . There were two naval actions in which on one occasion more than 500 *quinquermes* took part [Hermaeum, 255] and on the other nearly 700 [Economus, 256]. . . . Never before in the history of the world have two such immense forces been ranged against one another at sea.⁶

The war also witnessed the heaviest fatalities of any conflict in ancient history. Together, the Romans and the Carthaginians lost upwards of 200,000 men, in addition to more than 1,200 ships.

For the most part, the war was fought in and around the island of Sicily. When the war began, the Romans had quickly realized that they would be unable to defeat Carthage unless they somehow defeated its navy, since their enemy controlled the seas and most of the big cities of Sicily were on the coast. For the first time in Roman history, the Romans decided to build a navy. They based this navy on a Carthaginian ship that had run aground in Italy, and they used shipbuilders from southern Italian states to construct *quinquermes* based on the Carthaginian model. Very quickly the Romans were able to build a fleet of more than 200 ships to challenge Carthaginian mastery of the seas. Carthage, of course, had centuries of experience in naval warfare; the Romans did not. The Romans decided that trying to match the Carthaginians in naval tactics would bring defeat, so they invented a contraption known as the *corvus*, which was a long board with a spike on the end that could be dropped onto enemy ships, allowing Roman soldiers to board and to some extent turn

a naval battle into a land battle. Altogether there would be seven major naval battles during the First Punic War, five off the coast of Sicily. Surprisingly, the Romans won the first five of these encounters against the more experienced Carthaginians, and in all five the *corvus* played a crucial role.

There were in fact no major land battles fought in Sicily during the war. Instead, the campaigns on the island were a series of sieges and countersieges as both sides attempted to increase the number of cities they controlled, meaning, of course, the number of land and sea bases they controlled. Beginning in 264 with the capture of Messana, the Romans, using their superior numbers, had begun to spread, slowly but steadily, westward across the island. The Carthaginians were slowly pushed back to the western part of the island.

Despite these initial successes, Roman fortunes took a definite downturn as their momentum ebbed both in Sicily and at sea. An invasion of North Africa (256–255) ended in disaster. Natural disasters took their toll as storms wrecked Roman fleets. In 249, Rome suffered twin blows: it lost another fleet to a violent storm off Sicily's south coast, and the same year it suffered its only major naval defeat of the war at Drepanum, off Sicily's western coast.⁷

The Battle of the Aegates Islands, 241

After 249, the war entered a period of general calm as both sides recuperated from their incredible exertions during the earlier stages. Finally, in 242, the Romans, their treasury empty, made one last great effort, raising money from private sources to finance the building of a new fleet. C. Lutatius Catulus (cos. 242) led the navy to western Sicily, where he blockaded Drepanum and spent time training his sailors. In March 241, the Carthaginians sent out their own fleet, commanded by Hanno, to first resupply Drepanum and then to engage the new Roman fleet. However, Catulus learned of Hanno's approach and intercepted him near the Aegates Islands, west of Sicily. Hanno, coming from the south, had the wind behind him; this worried Catulus because he feared his men would not be able to make good headway rowing against the choppy waters, but, at the same time, he was afraid to let Hanno move past him to Sicily, where he could unload his supplies to lighten his ships, making them faster and more maneuverable, and where he could take on experienced marines. Catulus decided that now, March 10, was the time to attack. He therefore risked battle, a brave maneuver considering the disasters the Romans had suffered at the hands of the weather earlier in the war. The Romans were ready, having spent a year training; they had also lightened their ships; the heavy equipment and the *corvus* were now removed to increase speed and maneuverability.⁸ The Carthaginians, weighed down by their cargoes, were no match for the Roman fleet. The Carthaginians lost 120 ships sunk or captured. After suffering so many earlier losses, the Carthaginians now realized that they could no longer prosecute the war with the meager resources left to them. They were forced to sue for peace; the Romans had won the First Punic War.

The Romans imposed very harsh peace terms. The Carthaginians were forced to pay a large indemnity, and they were forbidden to have a navy in the future, meaning that Carthage's reign as the dominant naval power in the Mediterranean had now come to an end. Carthage was also forced to give up its territories in Sicily, and the island, with the exception of Syracuse, now became Rome's first overseas *provincia* (province). It is important to note that the enlightened terms that Rome had imposed on Italy did not extend beyond the peninsula. The people of Sicily and the peoples of other provinces later conquered by the Romans would be treated as subjects, not allies or citizens; as such, they would be ruthlessly exploited by the Romans.

THE SECOND PUNIC WAR, 218–202

Hannibal Barca of Carthage

When Hannibal was about nine years old he convinced his father Hamilcar to take him to Spain. So Hamilcar conducted his son to the altar and laying his hand on the offerings bound him by an oath to prove himself as soon as he could as an enemy to the Roman people. Young Hannibal swore.⁹

The peace between Rome and Carthage did not last, largely because of the young Hannibal's hatred of Rome, according to the biased Roman sources. Hannibal Barca ("Lightning," 247–183) accompanied his father, Hamilcar, to Spain and grew up with his father's army as it conquered Spain for Carthage. In 221, he took charge of the Carthaginian army and empire in Spain, and by the time the Second Punic War broke out in 218 he was already, at the age of 29, an experienced commander. Hannibal had a plan for how he was going to defeat the Romans. First of all, he believed he had a superior army. His infantry was made up of professional soldiers from all over the Mediterranean, unlike Rome's amateur citizen soldiers, and he had a bigger and better cavalry than the Romans. Hannibal also believed himself to be a great general, and he knew that Rome's generals were not professionals but instead were successful politicians. Hannibal decided that he was going to move his army to Italy, rather than wait to be attacked in Spain. When he arrived, he believed that he could defeat any Roman army sent against him. Once he won some military victories, he also believed, Rome's confederacy would fall apart, since most of Rome's citizens and allies were not ethnic Romans and only fear of Rome kept these people in line. To some extent, he was attempting to emulate the exploits of Alexander the Great, who had invaded Persia 116 years before with a relatively small army and, after winning three big victories, conquered the empire.

The Romans believed that this war would be over relatively quickly because of their overwhelming superiority in soldiers and ships. In 218, the Romans raised two separate armies and placed each under the command of a *consul*. One, under the command of P. Cornelius Scipio, would be sent west to attack Hannibal in Spain. The other, under the command of Ti. Sempronius Longus, would be sent to North Africa to attack Carthage itself. Rome's

control of the seas would allow it to dictate where the battles took place and keep the fighting far from Italy.

Roman expectations could not have been more wrong. Hannibal quickly moved his army out of Spain, over the Pyrenees, through southern France, and across the Alps. This march lasted for nearly three months, and Hannibal lost a significant number of soldiers and elephants along the way. But, by late 218, he had arrived in northern Italy with an experienced army of 25,000 infantry, mostly Iberians, Celts, and Africans, and 10,000 Numidian, Gallic, and Spanish cavalry. The cavalry was the strength of the army. The Numidians carried a shield but wore no armor. They would move quickly, holding onto their horse's neck strap while controlling the animal with their legs, hurling javelins to decimate their enemies before closing with short swords. Their speed was pivotal in skirmishing, in pursuit, and especially in Hannibal's envelopment tactics. The Gallic and Spanish contingents provided the heavy cavalry. And, though their numbers were sadly diminished after the crossing of the Alps, Hannibal still had 37 elephants. Scipio and his army had been traveling by sea to Spain and had been shocked to learn that Hannibal had passed him going the opposite direction by land. Scipio quickly turned around and chased after Hannibal. The other consular army on its way to North Africa was also quickly recalled and was now on its way to northern Italy.

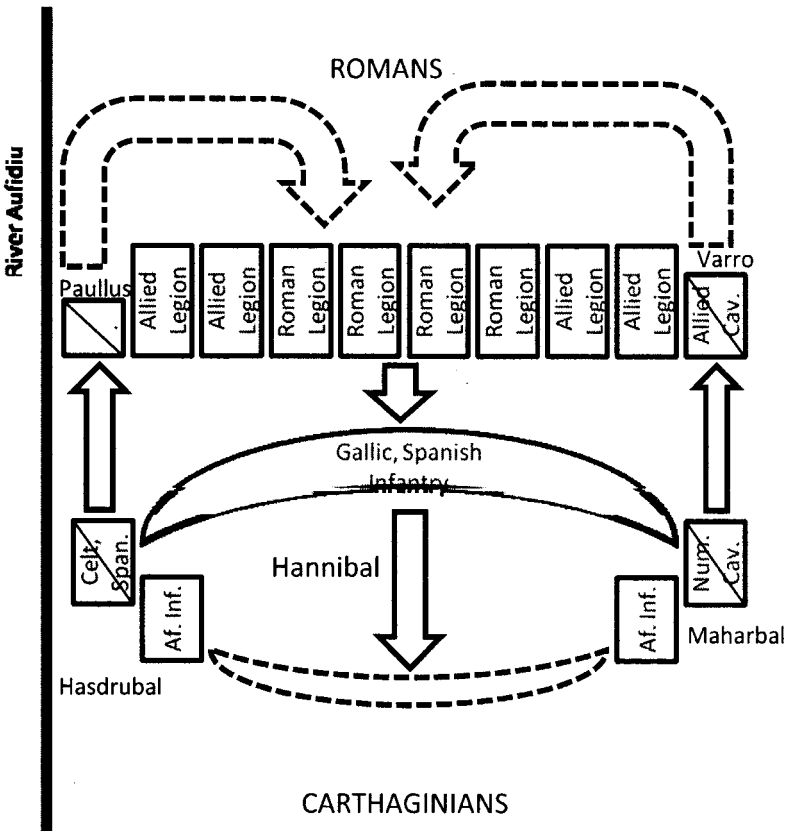
In 218 B.C.E., Hannibal fought two separate battles at the Ticinius and Trebia Rivers against these two Roman armies and won both, killing 30,000 Romans in the process. In 217, the Romans raised another army; Hannibal destroyed it too at Lake Trasimene, resulting in 35,000 more Roman casualties. The Romans did not give up; instead, they put together the largest army they had ever fielded: eight legions consisting of 80,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry. Hannibal was to be hunted down and destroyed.

Battle of Cannae, 216

The greatest land battle of the Second Punic War took place at Cannae and pitted 86,000 Roman soldiers against roughly 35,000 Carthaginians. Hannibal was outnumbered more than two to one, but he developed a plan for the battle that so successfully overcame his numerical disadvantage that generals have attempted to copy it ever since.¹⁰ He employed the famous double envelopment to surround his more numerous foe (see Figure 8.1). He had used similar tactics at the Ticinius and at the Trebia, but here it would succeed on a much greater level against a greater army.

Hannibal placed his Gallic and Spanish infantry in the center of his line, with his African infantry bracketing them on both sides. The line though was not straight; instead, it was shaped like a crescent, with the bottom of the bowl facing north toward the Romans and with the African contingents at each end. The cavalry was placed on the wings, the Numidians on the right, commanded by Maharbal, and the Gallic and Spanish horsemen, led by Hasdrubal, on the left next to the River Aufidus. The Romans faced south with infantry in the middle, the Latin cavalry on the left under the command of one *consul*, C. Terentius Varro, and the right wing next to the river, led by the

Figure 8.1
Battle of Cannae, 216



other *consul*, L. Aemilius Paullus. When the battle began, Hannibal's infantry except for the Africans retreated, slowly turning the crescent inside; this pulled the Roman infantry forward while the Africans remained where they were at the ends of the bowl. At the same time, the Carthaginian cavalry had charged forward and, in a repeat of earlier battles, killed or drove the Roman horsemen from the field. The Carthaginian cavalry then wheeled back to hit the Roman infantry from behind as the African infantry moved to the attack, as well. The Carthaginian infantry then halted its retreat and went over to the offensive. Unlike in earlier battles, the Carthaginian infantry was able to hold together, allowing no Romans to break through and escape. The Roman infantry therefore was enveloped: Carthaginian cavalry on the sides and behind, the African infantry on the flanks, and the infantry in front. Unable to escape, the Romans were massacred; possibly 80,000 men died on the field, including the *consul* Paullus and dozens of senators.

The Battle of Cannae reveals the horrors to which the average soldier was exposed in ancient war. The battle lasted for nine hours, in the summer heat, with winds producing swirling dust. The Roman soldiers were weighed

down by their armor. The sounds produced by two large armies were deafening. The sounds of armor, horses, and war cries caused a loss of confidence and panic even before battle was joined. Fear and panic caused numerous, sometimes severe physical reactions. As the enemy lines moved ever closer, arrows, javelins, and sling-stones began to fly. It was not unusual for a soldier to take an arrow or stone in the face and be killed or wounded even before the two lines made contact. When the two battle lines converged, ancient combat was hand to hand. Blood covered everything, making the battlefield slippery. The smells and the noise added to the horror. As the battle went on, bodies began to pile up, making movement difficult. Brutal, gory, agonizing death on a massive scale was visible to the combatants. The day after the battle, those who had been merely wounded were revived by the cold air, only to be killed by Gallic horsemen. The Roman historian Livy (59 B.C.E.–17 C.E.) describes the aftermath:

At dawn the next morning . . . some men were found who had their heads buried in the ground, [who in their panic] had apparently dug themselves holes and by smothering their faces with earth had choked themselves to death. Most strange of all was a soldier, still living and lying with nose and ears horribly lacerated, underneath the body of a Roman who when his useless hands had no longer been able to grasp his sword, had died in the act of tearing his enemy, in bestial fury with his teeth.¹¹

Hannibal had won four major battles and had killed nearly 150,000 Roman soldiers. Yet, after Cannae he did not immediately exploit his victory. Maharbal, his cavalry commander, begged Hannibal to send him on a dash for Rome. Maharbal argued that he and his men would arrive before news of the Cannae disaster and could therefore take the city by surprise. He promised that in five days time, Hannibal would be eating his dinner on the Capitoline Hill in the city of Rome. Hannibal, though, demurred, deciding to wait. Maharbal replied with the famous line “Surely no man has been blessed with all the gods’ gifts; you know how to win a battle Hannibal but you do not know how to use it.”¹²

The victory at Cannae did not precipitate revolts of Roman citizens in Italy; they remained loyal. However, after Cannae a number of *socii* did indeed defect. Much of southern Italy went over to Hannibal, including most of the regions of Bruttium and Samnium. Many Campanian cities also revolted, including Capua, the second greatest city in Italy.

After the disaster at Cannae, the Romans were now willing to fall back on a previously unpopular strategy; the delaying tactics of Q. Fabius Maximus Cunctator (“The Delayer,” cos. 233, 228, 215–214, 209) suddenly seemed more desirable. Under Fabius’s direction, the Romans would eventually raise more than 200,000 new soldiers. Fabius divided these men into smaller armies, each of which had a specific assignment. One of the armies was to be sent to Sicily to attack the Carthaginians and their allies on the island. A number of the armies would be sent around Italy to reconquer the states that had defected. And the last army would be used to follow Hannibal around. The Romans now knew it was imperative that they always have some idea where

Hannibal actually was. However, under no circumstances would this army engage Hannibal in battle. The Romans were now so afraid of Hannibal that they were going to avoid fighting a battle with him at all costs. These delaying tactics would not produce a quick victory but would allow the Romans to employ their superior numbers to gradually turn the tide of the war in their favor.

The Invasion of Africa and the Battle of Zama, 204–202

The Fabian tactics eventually succeeded in saving Rome, but for the war to end someone would have to defeat Hannibal in battle. Fortunately, such a commander did appear: P. Cornelius Scipio, the son of the Scipio who was the *consul* of 218. The younger Scipio was born in 236 and at the age of just 18 saved his father's life at the Battle of the Ticinius River. Scipio served as a military tribune of legion II at Cannae and was one of the 4,000 Romans who escaped after the battle to Canusium. When some of his fellow survivors despaired of the future and talked of fleeing to Greece, Scipio supposedly drew his sword and demanded that they all swear an oath vowing never to betray Rome. In 210, Scipio took command of the Roman army fighting the Carthaginians in Spain. By 206 B.C.E., through a combination of Scipio's military and diplomatic abilities, the Carthaginians had been driven out of Spain. Spain was made into a Roman province, and it would remain in the empire for the next six centuries. After four years in Spain, Scipio's citizen soldiers were now no longer amateurs but experienced veterans. His many tactical reforms made his army far more flexible than it had been in the past. Also, his generous relations with Spanish and African princes won over numerous allies for Rome, which would prove handy in the coming battles with the Carthaginians.

When Scipio returned to Italy, he received a hero's welcome; he celebrated a magnificent *triumph* and as a reward for his service was elected *consul* for the year 205. Once in office, Scipio convinced the Senate and the people to send him to North Africa to threaten Carthage directly, something that had not been attempted since the ill-fated invasion during the First Punic War (256–255).

After a year of preparation, Scipio and his army of 12,000 men landed in Africa in 204. Scipio was able to win a vital new ally, King Masinissa of Numidia, who made available his incomparable cavalry to the Romans rather than to the Carthaginians. Scipio ravaged Carthaginian territory and seized or won over a number of cities. In 203, he used his new army to defeat 20,000 Carthaginians at the Battle of the Great Plains. This battle was in many ways similar to Hannibal's victory at Cannae; the Roman infantry held the Carthaginian center long enough to enable the Roman and Numidian cavalry on the wings, along with some of Scipio's flexible new infantry units, to envelop the enemy army. Scipio controlled the lands south and west of Carthage and even established a base at Tunis, within sight of Carthage.

Now desperate, the Carthaginian government sent an urgent message to Hannibal begging him to leave Italy and return to North Africa to defend the capital. Reluctantly, Hannibal agreed, and he sailed for the home he had not seen since he was nine years old. He had been forced to leave Italy even though he had defeated the Romans in four major battles, killed more than 150,000 Roman soldiers and ravaged the Italian countryside without serious opposition for 15 years. He had never suffered a significant defeat in Italy. Yet, despite these facts, he had been unable to defeat the Romans or convince enough of its citizens or allies to defect. Ultimately, his plan to destroy the Roman confederacy had failed. According to Livy, Hannibal bemoaned his fate as he sailed away:

Seldom has any exile left his native land with so heavy a heart as Hannibal's when he left the country of his enemies. Again and again he looked back at the shores of Italy, cursing gods and men, and calling down curses on his own head for not having led his armies straight to Rome when they were still bloody from the glorious field of Cannae.¹³

The decisive battle of the war would take place in 202 at Zama, roughly 75 miles southwest of Carthage. Hannibal had 40,000 men and 80 elephants. He placed his infantry in the middle arranged in three lines: mercenaries in front, Libyans and Carthaginians in the middle, and in the back, to steady the whole line and prevent them from panicking, 24,000 veterans of the Italian campaigns. On the left was the Numidian cavalry (those that had not defected with Masinissa) and on the right were Carthaginian horsemen. The 80 elephants were stationed in front of the infantry and would be used to break the Roman line as had happened during the previous Roman invasion of North Africa, back in 255.

Scipio had 23,000 infantry in the center of his line, with the Numidian cavalry of Masinissa on the left and the Italian cavalry led by C. Laelius on the right. For the first time in the war, a Roman army would have a superior, more numerous cavalry, thanks to Masinissa's defection.

The battle opened with a Roman cavalry attack that seemingly drove the Carthaginian cavalry from the field, though this may have been a ploy by Hannibal to strip the Roman infantry of cavalry protection. His elephants then charged but did not achieve the desired results; Scipio had established broad lanes within his infantry lines, and apparently the elephants charged through harmlessly. Once through, Scipio's units quickly moved to fill the gaps and then went over to the attack. The Carthaginian infantry was already hard pressed when Laelius's and Masinissa's cavalry suddenly reappeared and attacked them from behind. The battle turned into a rout; Hannibal escaped and fled back to Carthage. The Carthaginians lost 20,000 men, the Romans 2,000.

After the defeat at Zama, the Carthaginians were unable to continue to prosecute the war, and, at the urging of Hannibal, they sued for peace. Once again, the Romans imposed harsh peace terms. The Carthaginians were forced to pay an indemnity, they forfeited most of their territory so that the

empire of Carthage would now consist of little more than the city itself and some of the surrounding area, and they were forbidden to go to war without Rome's express approval.

The Roman triumph at Zama in 202 was a dramatic turning point in world history. First, no other great power would be as hard to defeat as Carthage, and once the Carthaginians had been humbled, the Romans would face little difficulty from that point on. Second, despite the fact that the Romans had been victorious, they would long be traumatized by Hannibal's great successes in Italy. The Romans were terrified that a new Hannibal might someday arise, so they began a series of preemptive wars designed to ensure that no state would have the time or the leisure to develop into a great power that could one day threaten Rome. Last but not least, P. Cornelius Scipio had defeated the greatest enemy Rome had ever faced in its history. Because of his victory, he received greater military glory than any previous Roman and even a new nickname, "Africanus." This glory translated into political power back in Rome, specifically in the Senate, so for the next decade Scipio was the most influential man in the Roman state. Other senators were, of course, happy that Hannibal had been defeated, but they were also jealous of Scipio's incredible military glory and resulting political power. These senators wanted their opportunity for military glory. So, even though Rome had just finished a war that had lasted for almost 16 years, less than two years later the Romans went to war again to prevent the rise of another Hannibal and to provide opportunities for military glory for Rome's senators. The expansion of Rome's empire had only just begun.

THE ROMAN CONQUEST OF THE MEDITERRANEAN, 200–146

Less than two years after Hannibal's defeat at Zama, the Romans began a war with Macedonia. This war, known as the Second Macedonian War, would be Rome's first major step toward the conquest of the eastern Mediterranean world. Rome fought four major wars during this period, which would, by 146, bring it mastery of the Mediterranean:

1. The Second Macedonian War, 200–196
2. The War with Antiochus and the Seleucid Empire, 192–189
3. The Third Macedonian War, 172–168
4. The Third Punic War, 149–146

The Second Macedonian War, 200–196

The Romans had already fought a war, known as the First Macedonian War, against Macedonia between 215 and 205 B.C.E. The Macedonians, led by their king, Philip V (r. 221–179), the great-great grandson of Antigonus Monophthalmos, had allied with Hannibal after Cannae. Philip, believing that Rome's power had been broken, jumped in to advance his own interests. Unfortunately, the tide of the war turned against Hannibal, and Philip was

bogged down fighting various Roman allies in Greece. Philip gained nothing from his alliance with Hannibal except the undying hatred of the Romans. In 200, after Carthage had been defeated, the Senate had decided to take revenge on Philip; now they had to get the approval of the people in the Tribal Assembly. Normally this was not difficult to do, but in this case, after 16 years of war with Hannibal, the people did not wish for another conflict and initially rejected the Senate's request for war. However, the Senate did not give up so easily; the *consul* C. Aurelius Cotta called an assembly and explained to the people why the war against Philip was not a war of choice but a war of necessity blessed by the gods:

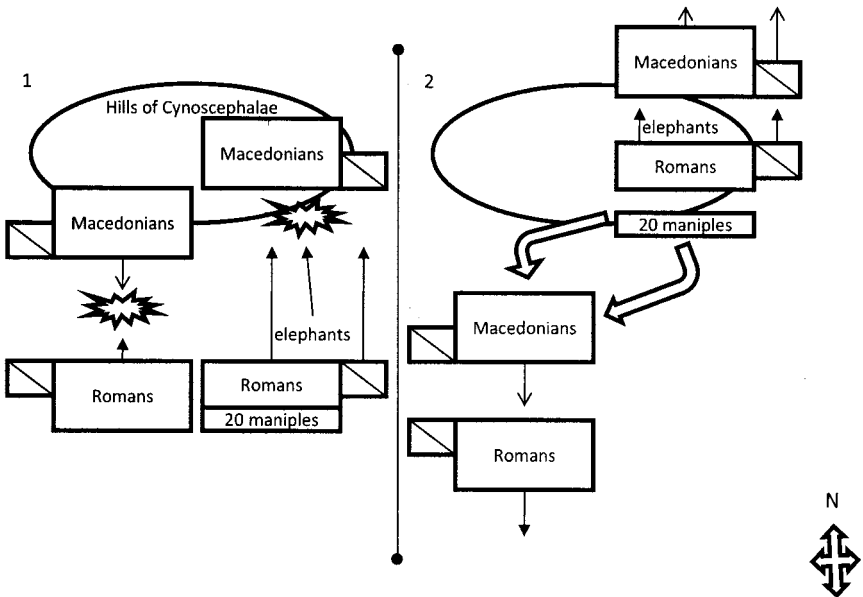
Citizens . . . you are not being asked to decide whether to choose war or peace, for Philip will not leave that choice open to you seeing that he is already preparing for unlimited hostilities on land and sea. What you are really being asked to decide is whether you will transport legions to Macedonia or allow the enemy into Italy; you know the difference this makes from the recent Punic War . . . by our hesitation we allowed the war to enter Italy, bringing untold disaster upon us. . . . Let Macedonia, instead of Italy, be the scene of the fighting, let it be the cities and the countryside of the enemy that suffer the devastation of fire and sword. . . . It is not just the consul who puts forth this resolution, it has the backing of the immortal gods, for when I made sacrifice, with a prayer that this war be blessed with success for me, for the Senate, for you and for our allies, for our fleets and our armies, the gods gave omens of a joyful and prosperous issue.¹⁴

The people, terrified by the thought of an invasion by a new Hannibal, voted again, this time in favor of war with Macedonia. The Romans delivered an ultimatum to Philip V that they knew he could not accept: they demanded that he withdraw from all territories that he controlled outside of Macedonia and that he not make war on any enemy without Rome's approval. Philip desired to avoid a war with Rome but could not accept such drastic terms. When the ultimatum was rejected, the Romans had their pretext to start the Second Macedonian War.

Rome enjoyed overwhelming advantages. It still possessed hundreds of thousands of loyal, patriotic soldiers who either were citizens or hoped to become citizens at some point. After 16 years of war, these men no longer made up an inexperienced citizen militia but instead were hardened professionals. Philip knew these facts, and he knew that he was generally unpopular in Greece. Appeals to Greek unity in the face of a foreign invader went unheeded; there was to be no repeat of Salamis and Plataea. Philip therefore adopted a Fabian strategy to try and protect the approaches into Macedonian territory while avoiding a battle that could provide Rome with a decisive victory. He hoped that war-weary Rome might at some point simply pull out, as it had done in 205 at the end of the First Macedonian War.

In late 200, Ser. Sulpicius Galba (cos. 211, 200) landed at Apollonia with two legions, roughly 25,000 men. Philip's plan faltered almost immediately, as he did not have the manpower to defend every front. The Roman successes convinced most wavering Greek states, especially the Aetolian League, to join them. Philip was forced to retreat into northeastern Thessaly and the Vale of

Figure 8.2
Battle of Cynoscephalae, 197



Tempe, allowing the Roman army and those of their Greek allies to follow. More states came over to Rome, including Sparta and the Achaean League.

Philip realized that only a major victory over the Romans could retrieve his position. He had 23,500 infantry and 2,000 cavalry, barely half the army Alexander led against Persia, demonstrating the incredible drain on Macedonian manpower caused by Alexander and his successors' campaigns. The Roman general T. Quinctius Flamininus (cos. 198) had 26,000 infantry and 2,400 cavalry. In 197, the two armies were moving west along a ridge known as Cynoscephalae, the Macedonians on the northern side and the Romans on the southern side. The battle that ensued occurred by chance (see Figure 8.2). In a heavy fog, a Roman search party of cavalry and 1,000 infantry stumbled upon a Macedonian fort on one of Cynoscephalae's many hills. As the two sides fought, the momentum shifted back and forth until the Macedonians gained the upper hand. The Romans, in retreat and outnumbered, sent frantic messages back to Flamininus, south of the hill, that they were under attack and needed immediate reinforcements. Flamininus sent 2,000 infantry and 500 cavalry under the command of two military *tribunes*. With these reinforcements, the Romans then gained the upper hand. Philip was completely at a loss as to what to do next, and for the moment he lost his nerve; he could not see clearly the action on the hill because of the fog that was covering the area, nor was he receiving accurate information concerning the skirmish. Finally the fog lifted, and the action on the hill above became clearer. Philip now decided to send in further reinforcements; he ordered his mercenary, Macedonian, and Thessalian infantry to the hilltop. They were successful in

driving the Romans down the hill and onto the valley floor south of the hills. This success convinced Philip that the battle was now his for the taking, and he ordered his entire army into action. Flamininus ordered his army to draw up for battle. The Battle of Cynoscephalae had begun by accident.

Since the fighting had begun so quickly, both sides had to make do with very quick preparations. Philip brought the right side of his line, consisting of part of the *phalanx*, light-armed troops, and cavalry, to the top of the hill and immediately began moving down the hill toward the battle below. The left, led by Nicanor, was still making its way up the northern face of the hill, so the Macedonians did not have one continuous battle line, as the left was to some extent, because of its hurry, in disarray. Philip led his right wing into battle and, moving downhill with the cream of his troops, began driving the Roman left back toward the Roman camp. However, Flamininus had stationed his best infantry, his cavalry, and his elephants on the right, which was able to take advantage of the disarray of the Macedonian left and drive it from the battlefield before it could form a proper line. At that moment, the battle seemed to be evenly matched, the Macedonians advancing on their right, the Romans on their right. However, in an instant, the battle turned in a way that clearly demonstrated the superiority of the Roman legion over the Macedonian and Greek *phalanx*. A military *tribune*, whose name has not been preserved, was able to quickly read the tactical situation. He knew that the Roman right, where he was stationed, was winning and that the Roman left was faltering. So, acting quickly and without orders, the military *tribune* pulled 20 *maniples* from the rear of the advancing Roman right and immediately led those *maniples* downhill in a diagonal move southwest to attack the advancing Macedonian right on the valley floor from the sides and from behind. No other army had this type of flexibility that could allow the rapid detachment of a significant number of units to quickly move in the opposite direction. Certainly no *hoplite* army had that type of flexibility, since the soldiers usually fought in a great mass, rather than in smaller units. The formation of the *phalanx* also meant that the men were packed in so tightly that a change of direction for even a small number would have been difficult. Of course, the *sarissas* of the Macedonians also played a role in this immobility, since they would be unable to effectively maneuver their weapons in any direction other than straight ahead. This was especially true when the *phalanx* was attacked from behind, as it was at Cynoscephalae; the Macedonian *hoplites* were unable to move their spears to turn and face an attack from behind if they wished to keep their weapons. For the Romans, having such a well-defined chain of command and so many military *tribunes* or *centurions* meant that someone in authority was always close to the men. This could be someone close enough to see the way the battle was unfolding when a commander might be too far away. The military *tribune* had the authority to order the 20 *maniples* to move with him. He did not have to waste time convincing them it was indeed a good idea; he could simply order them to move. He also did not have to relay a request to a different commander; instead, he had the freedom to act quickly on his idea.

The Macedonian right, facing attacks from the front, from the sides, and from behind, crumbled; many were killed, other threw away their weapons and escaped, giving victory to the Romans. The Macedonians lost 8,000 men killed and 5,000 captured.

Macedonia could absorb only one major defeat before it was forced to surrender. The Romans imposed harsh peace terms. Philip's territory was restricted to Macedonia, and he had to pay an indemnity of 1,000 *talents*. The rest of Greece was granted its freedom from Macedonia and any other outside power. This was announced at the Isthmian Games in 194 to the great surprise and happiness of the Greek people:

A trumpet sounded to command silence and a crier made a proclamation that the Roman Senate and T. Quinctius Flaminius the Roman general, having defeated King Philip and the Macedonians, restored the Greeks to their own laws, lands and liberties, canceling all tribute placed upon them and withdrawing all garrisons from their cities. . . . A shout of joy followed which could be heard all the way to the sea. The whole assembly leapt up, saluted, and thanked their deliverer and champion [Flaminius]. . . . Crows that happened to fly over fell dead from the sky because the voices were so numerous and violent the air broke and no longer gave support to the birds.¹⁵

The Romans then pulled out of Greece, having annexed no territory.

It should be noted that, although they receive the most attention, wars between Rome and other great powers such as Macedonia were generally few and far between. Most of Rome's wars were not fought against civilized peoples but instead were fought against various tribes of varying degrees of sophistication. Rome was at war continuously during the second century, literally every single year, often facing more than one foe. The military system established by Rome in Italy provided the necessary manpower to fight so many wars simultaneously while holding a vast empire. In 197, while a major war was being conducted against Philip, two Roman armies were fighting in the mountains of northern Italy, and two more armies were fighting in Spain. This meant that Rome had five armies in addition to a navy and more than 100,000 fighting men in the field simultaneously. The year 197 illustrates the typical range of Roman military adventures and the commitment of men necessary for success:

1. C. Cornelius Cethegus, *consul*, defeated Insubres and Cenomani in northern Italy.
2. Q. Minucius Rufus, *consul*, defeated Ligurians and Boii in northern Italy.
3. M. Helvius, *praetor*, fought against tribal revolts in Further Spain.
4. C. Sempronius Tuditanus, *praetor*, fought against tribal revolts in Nearer Spain.
5. T. Quinctius Flaminius, *proconsul*, defeated Macedonians at Cynoscephale.
6. L. Quinctius Flaminius, *legate*, commanded a Roman fleet in Greek waters.

The War with Antiochus the Great, 192–189

The peace Rome established in Greece did not last, because of the appearance of a new, greater enemy, the most powerful monarch in the east,

King Antiochus III (r. 223–187), the great-great-grandson of Seleucus I. The zenith of the Seleucid Empire had come in 281 B.C.E., when Seleucus I won the Battle of Corupedion and extended his empire from Thrace all the way to the borders of India. But, since 281, the empire had been in steady decline. Numerous ethnic groups had risen up in rebellion and had regained their independence. Pergamum, under Philetairos and Attalus I, had not only become independent but had expanded into a substantial kingdom in western Anatolia. In the east, Indian provinces had already been lost during the time of Chandragupta Maurya. Later, Diodotus I had led the successful rebellion of Bactria (256). The Parthians under their king Arsaces I had regained their freedom in 247. Constant civil wars, such as the War between the Brothers (239–236 B.C.E.), had further weakened the empire. This civil war allowed numerous other territories, including Bithynia, Pontus, and Galatia (all in Anatolia), to become independent. On top of all this, the Seleucid Empire had fought the six “Syrian” Wars against Ptolemaic Egypt. Therefore, the empire inherited by Antiochus III in 223 was far less powerful than that of Seleucus only a half-century before.

Antiochus dreamed of reconstituting the empire of his great-great-grandfather. First, he stamped out all internal rivals. Then he reconquered Syria and weakened Pergamum. In 212, Antiochus went on his famous *Anabasis* (“march up-country”), trying to emulate Alexander the Great. By 205, he had been successful in reintroducing Seleucid hegemony in Bactria, Arachosia, and Gedrosia. Even in India, he was able to gain some territory because the Mauryan Empire had begun to disintegrate after the death of its greatest king, Asoka the Beloved, in 232. For his exploits in the east, Antiochus became known as the “Great,” the first Hellenistic king to receive this nickname since Alexander more than a hundred years before. After so much success in the east, Antiochus wished to reclaim those lands that had once been part of his empire in the west, including Thrace, the Hellespont, Western Anatolia, and Pergamum. However, his ambition went further than that; he dreamed of conquering Greece, which Seleucus had briefly held before his assassination in 281.

The Romans had pulled out of Greece in 194, but not everyone had been happy with Rome’s arrangements. Some of Rome’s allies, especially the cities of the Aetolian League, had expected to make significant territorial gains after fighting alongside Rome. When the Romans freed all of the Greek states from outside dominance, the Aetolians were disappointed. Once the Romans left Greece, the Aetolians decided to call in Antiochus so that he could use his power to make more suitable arrangements. Antiochus already desired to reconquer those lands that had once been Seleucus’s; the call of the Aetolians would give him an excuse to cross over into Greece. In 192, Antiochus crossed the Aegean, declaring that he had come to “free the Greeks,” an ironic piece of propaganda considering that Greece had already been freed by the Romans. Thus began the War against Antiochus (192–189).

Because of the reputation of Antiochus and the size and wealth of his empire, the Romans believed that this was would be the most difficult war

they ever fought. What made them even more frightened was the arrival of Hannibal at Antiochus's court in 195.¹⁶ Not surprisingly, Hannibal counseled Antiochus to start a war with Rome. Fearing a new invasion of Italy by their old enemy Hannibal, the Romans called up massive reserves to protect the coasts and to protect the port cities such as Brundisium. A navy was quickly put into service to guard the sea accesses to Italy and Sicily.

However, Antiochus did not heed Hannibal's advice and instead focused on Greece. He brought only a relatively small army of 10,000 infantry and 500 cavalry, again ignoring the advice of Hannibal to lead a larger force.¹⁷ Antiochus expected far more military support when he arrived, but, aside from the Aetolians, he received little. The Romans sent an army to Greece in February 191. M'. Acilius Glabrio (cos. 191) landed at Apollonia with 20,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry, and 15 elephants and, with the help of Philip V, proceeded southeast into Thessaly. Antiochus moved north from Calchis to Lamia to confront the Romans but found that his army was outnumbered, so he retreated and took up a position at the pass of Thermopylae. For three days he was able to defend the pass against repeated Roman attacks. But, unbelievably, Antiochus had forgotten his Greek history. The 300 Spartans led by Leonidas had also held the pass against repeated Persian attacks before the Persians discovered the secret path that led through the mountains down to the other side of Thermopylae; 389 years later, the role of Hydarnes was played by M. Porcius Cato (cos. 195), who led a small force along the Anopaea Pass to take Antiochus's forces from behind. Almost the entire army of the king was wiped out. Antiochus was able to escape back to Asia, landing at Ephesus with only 500 men.

The Romans had successfully defended Greece against Antiochus but now made a monumental decision. In 190, for the first time in history, a Roman army landed on the continent of Asia. The Roman commander was L. Cornelius Scipio (cos. 190), the brother of the victor of Zama. The Romans moved down the coast from the Hellespont, then stopped at Elaea to pick up Eumenes II and the contingents from Pergamum. The army then turned east, marching inland to meet Antiochus at Magnesia. Antiochus had chosen this spot because it was flat and therefore conducive to the use of chariots, cavalry, and elephants.

Antiochus's army was similar to the Hellenistic armies at Paraitakene, Gabiene, and Ipsus: a core of Macedonians and Greeks supported by various units from around the empire. In the center, Antiochus placed his best Macedonian infantry *phalanx*, 16,000 men altogether, along with the elite *argyraspides*, the 10,000 men of the "Silver Shields." In front were the king's 54 elephants, led by Philippus, his elephant master. In between the two main units were a unit of 1,500 Galatians, 3,000 heavy cavalry, and the elite *agema*, 1,000 men of the king's cavalry. On the right wing was another cavalry unit made up of 1,200 Dahae. On the left wing were four more cavalry units, including more heavy cavalry, and Tarentine and Galatian cavalry. In addition, on the left, were scythed chariots. Antiochus was in the position of honor on the right, and his son Seleucus and his nephew Antipater commanded the left.

The Roman army was drawn up in standard fashion: two Roman infantry legions in the center, each flanked by an *ala* of allied troops divided into the three lines of, from front to back, *hastati*, *principes*, and *triarii* and commanded by Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus (cos. 192). Most of the Roman and auxiliary cavalry was placed on the right under the command of King Eumenes. The units of *peltasts*, including Achaeans, Trallians, and Cretans, were also on the right. Only four *turmae* were placed on the left. The Romans stationed their 16 elephants in support behind their lines not only because they were outnumbered but also because the Rome's African elephants could not stand up to the larger, stronger Indian elephants of Antiochus.

Antiochus and his heavy Iranian cavalry on the right charged against the Roman left, breaking through the infantry and cavalry stationed there. Unfortunately, Antiochus did not transform this breakthrough into a decisive moment of battle. Instead, he was carried away by his success and, rather than turn back to hit the Roman flanks or rear, he and his cavalry continued forward all the way to the Roman camp. His mistake was very similar to Demetrios's failure to turn back at the Battle of Ipsos in 301, but even had Antiochus not known about this earlier battle, he should have learned from a similar example from early in his own career. In 217, Antiochus fought the Battle of Raphia against Ptolemaic Egypt. In this battle, Antiochus had led his cavalry to a similar breakthrough but then failed to return to help his army while continuing his pursuit of the defeated enemy left. Though he had been victorious, the rest of his army was defeated, and he lost the battle. History repeated itself at Magnesia; with Antiochus and his cavalry dragged away from the field, the Romans were able to take control of the battle. Eumenes used his slingers, javelin throwers, and Cretan archers to thwart the scythed chariots on which Antiochus had placed so much hope. Again the ineffectiveness of chariots was clearly demonstrated, as it had been 1,000 years before at the end of the Bronze Age. Eumenes then led a charge of the Roman right and broke Antiochus's left; his cavalry was either forced off the field or pushed back onto his infantry, sowing confusion. Meanwhile, Ahenobarbus's infantry moved steadily forward, first unleashing their *pila* and then going over to the attack. Antiochus's *phalanx* was already under pressure when Eumenes' cavalry charged in from the left. The *phalanx*, with the aid of the elephants stationed in the gaps between the individual infantry units, resisted until finally the elephants panicked and stampeded, wreaking havoc with the infantry line. Antiochus's army collapsed. The Romans had won.

Antiochus was now forced to surrender, and the Romans imposed strict peace terms. The Seleucid Empire lost all of its territory in Anatolia north and west of the Taurus Mountains. Roman allies, especially Pergamum, received Seleucid land. Antiochus was forced to pay an indemnity of 15,000 *talents*, the largest indemnity in ancient history, larger than the 10,000 *talents* paid by Carthage and 15 times that of Macedonia. One last article of the peace stipulated that Antiochus hand over Hannibal. However, he escaped and, as evidence of the incredible fear that he still inspired in Rome, the Romans spent the next six years chasing him around. In 183, just as they

were about to capture him, the 63-year-old Carthaginian committed suicide.¹⁸ The defeat at Magnesia represented the beginning of the end of Seleucid power; from this point on, they would not be able to challenge Rome. The Roman victor at Magnesia, L. Cornelius Scipio, received a nickname to glorify his great victory; as his brother was known as Africanus, he would now be known as Asiaticus.

The Third Macedonian War, 172–168

The next step in Rome's march to empire was another war with Macedonia. The new Macedonian king Perseus (r. 179–168) had followed in his father Philip's footsteps by attempting to rebuild the power of Macedonia, mostly by rebuilding the size of its army. The Romans, always on the lookout for new opportunities for military glory and for potential threats, decided that Macedonia must be stopped. Allied complaints provided the necessary pretext to start a war. In 172, Pergamum's king, Eumenes II, arrived in Rome and went before the Senate to convince the Romans to attack Perseus. On his way home, he stopped at Delphi and was nearly killed there by a sudden landslide of falling rocks. He claimed that this was in fact the work of Perseus. Though Perseus's involvement is highly unlikely, this "atrocious" so shocked the Romans that they began the Third Macedonian War (172–168).

In 171, P. Licinius Crassus (cos. 171) landed at Apollonia with an army of 37,000 men. Perseus could counter this with an army of 43,000 men; this was far more than the 26,000 men his father had at Cynoscephalae 26 years before and demonstrates the success of both Philip's and Perseus's efforts to increase Macedonian manpower. Perseus's plan for victory was similar to that of his father; he knew he could not compete with Roman numbers and hoped therefore to avoid major battles and frustrate the Romans by dragging out the war as long as possible in the hope that the Romans would lose patience and give up on the war altogether. He therefore guarded the various mountain passes into Macedonia and hoped to prevent a Roman invasion of his territory. The strategy worked at first; Roman armies were unable to break into Macedonia and were unable to win a decisive victory. As the war dragged on into its fourth year, the Roman people became angry, believing that Rome's inability to end this war was a result of the incompetence of Roman generals and of their inability to impose proper discipline on the Roman soldiers.

Finally, L. Aemilius Paullus (cos. 182, 168), the son of the general killed at Cannae, was elected consul for the year 168. He arrived in Greece and immediately reestablished discipline in his army. He then moved east to confront Perseus. Perseus had taken up a position on the Elpeus River, which guarded the eastern, coastal road into Macedonia. Unable to force Perseus's position, Paullus sent a military *tribune*, P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica Corculum (cos. 162, 155), with 8,000 soldiers, to take another route into Macedonia while Paullus held Perseus at the Elpeus.¹⁹ Nasica and his men moved almost in

a complete circle: south to Heraclea, then southwest through the Vale of Tempe, and then north and west along the western side of Mount Olympus across a narrow pass, eventually moving east and dropping down behind and to the north of Perseus. Perseus, believing his position had been turned, quickly retreated from the Elpeus, allowing Paullus and the main Roman army to march through.

The two armies encamped near each other, separated only by the small Leucus River. On June 22, 168, both sides moved out of their camps and were drawn up for battle, yet, after remaining on the field, for some time both sides withdrew. But then a strange event took place that sparked a major battle. Late in the day, a Roman pack animal broke away from its handlers and sprinted across the narrow river. A few Romans gave chase and ran into Thracian soldiers serving in Perseus's army. A brief skirmish ensued, which gradually grew larger until significant numbers of troops were drawn in from both sides. Apparently, Perseus decided that now was as good a time as any and went all in, forming up his army for battle. Paullus did likewise. The Battle of Pydna had begun.

The Roman army was lined up in the traditional fashion: legions I and II in the center flanked by two allied infantry *alae*, with the cavalry on the wings. There was one nontraditional element: 22 elephants stationed on the right in between the infantry and the cavalry. The Macedonian army consisted of units that would have been familiar to Philip II and that were very different from those of the Seleucid or Ptolemaic monarchies. Various contingents of Macedonian *hoplites* drawn up in the traditional *phalanx* manned the center. These units included the Bronze and the White Shields and the *agema*, the elite royal guard. On the wings was the Macedonian cavalry.

The Macedonian *phalanx* advanced. Paullus later spoke of the sight: "The great strength of the wall of shields . . . bristling with arms, I was seized with amazement and fear having never seen anything like it."²⁰ Paullus, though, hid his fears from his men, calmly riding through his army without breastplate or helmet while smiling. Initially, Paullus's internal fears seemed justified; the Macedonian *phalanx* pushed inexorably forward, and the Roman infantry was forced to give ground. But, as the Macedonians moved forward, the ground rose uphill and became broken, slowing their progress and creating gaps in the line. The flexibility of the Roman legions again proved its worth as the small *maniple* units, armed with short swords, then moved back downhill and quickly penetrated the gaps in the enemy line. At the same time, the Roman right, spearheaded by the elephants and the cavalry, broke the Macedonian left and then attacked the Macedonian *phalanx* from the flanks and from the rear. Under this incredible pressure, the *phalanx* broke. More than 20,000 Macedonians fell on the field of Pydna, and another 11,000 were captured. The last battle ever fought by the Macedonian army ended in defeat; the superiority of the Roman legion was again demonstrated.

Perseus was eventually captured, and the Romans decided to bring an end to the Macedonian monarchy and replaced it with four separate independent republics. L. Aemilius Paullus returned to Rome to celebrate the

greatest triumph the city had ever witnessed. Perseus was forced to walk in the *triumph*. The kingdom of Macedonia, home of Philip and Alexander the Great, was no more.

The Third Punic War, 149–146

The year 146 B.C.E. marked the final chapter in Rome's quest for Mediterranean domination. First came the reckoning with Carthage. Carthaginian power had been dramatically reduced as a result of the Second Punic War (218–202). Nonetheless, Roman fear of a potential Carthaginian revival brought about the Third Punic War (149–146). This last war was essentially a siege. A Roman army of 80,000 men arrived outside Carthage and then spent the next three years trying to break into the city. However, the walls of Carthage were so strong that the Roman armies were initially ineffective.

Eventually, in 146, the Romans, led by a new commander P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus (cos. 147, 134), finally captured the city. More than 250,000 people had been killed in the siege and in the fighting to capture the city; the 50,000 survivors were enslaved. However, this did not satisfy the Romans, so they tore the city down, literally brick by brick. They then set fire to it, a fire that would last for 10 days. They ploughed the ruins under, and they sowed salt in the fields to prevent anything from growing. They pronounced a curse on the sight to ensure that nobody would ever settle there again.²¹ Africa was turned into a Roman province.

The victorious general Scipio was moved to tears by the sight of the dying city. The Greek historian Polybius was an eyewitness:

Scipio beheld this city which had flourished for seven hundred years now come to its end in total destruction. Seeing this Scipio wept reflecting on the inevitable fall of cities, nations, and empires, upon the fate of Troy, that once proud city, upon the fate of the Assyrian, the Median, and after of the great Persian Empire and most recently of all the splendid empire of Macedonia, and the words of the poet [Homer] escaped his lips "the day shall come in which our sacred Troy and Priam and the people over whom Priam ruled shall all perish." Scipio was asked by Polybius what he meant by all these words and Scipio did not hesitate to name his own country for whose fate he feared when he considered the mutability of human affairs.²²

That same year, in Greece, a Roman army led by L. Mummius crushed a revolt in Macedonia, destroyed the Achaean League, and sacked the city of Corinth as a warning. Greek independence came to a dramatic and sudden end in 146 as both Greece and Macedonia were made into Roman provinces. The Romans now controlled an empire consisting of Italy, the islands, southern France, Spain, North Africa, Illyria, Macedonia, and Greece. There were still states outside Rome's control, such as Egypt, but no country could challenge Rome's supremacy. By 146 B.C.E., Rome was by far the most powerful state in the Mediterranean world, a position it would hold for the next 600 years.

Nine

The Fall of the Roman Republic, 133–31 B.C.E.

PROBLEMS IN THE ROMAN ARMY, 133–79

The year 133 initiated a period of history known as the Roman Revolution (133–31 B.C.E.). It began as political violence in the city but would eventually expand into outright civil war that affected every province in the empire, brought death to thousands of people, and caused massive economic destruction until the Republic ultimately collapsed.

By 133, there was so much power and wealth involved in Rome's political competition that some senators became corrupt. They increasingly resorted to methods that were unprecedented, illegal, or even violent to reverse or prevent a political defeat. Some senators even resorted to civil war to reverse or prevent a political defeat. As time passed and as the willingness to bend or break the constitutional rules increased, the Republic began to totter and eventually fell.

Linked to the political problems of the late Republic were growing problems in the Roman army. By 133, for the first time ever, Rome was having trouble recruiting sufficient soldiers for its many military obligations. Rome was always fighting at least one war and now had numerous provinces that required large garrisons to control subject peoples. However, Rome was after all this time still a *polis*, meaning that only those with the proper property qualifications were eligible to fight. Usually farmers were enlisted, since possessing a small piece of land was enough to qualify a citizen for military service and it was believed that inhabitants of rural Italy were the best fighters. However, thanks to a combination of factors, the number of small farmers had declined by 133. In some cases, this was a result of long military service in the provinces, which could bankrupt a farmer. In a famous speech, the *tribune* of 133, Ti. Sempronius Gracchus, decried the fate of the peasant farmer forced to serve in Rome's continuous wars overseas:

The wild beasts that wander over Italy have their dens and holes to lurk in but the men who have fought and died for Rome enjoy the air and light and nothing else. It is their lot to wander with their wives and children, houseless and homeless, over the face of

the earth. . . . The truth is that they fought and died to protect the wealth and luxury of the others. They are called masters of the world, but they do not possess a single clod of earth to call their own.¹

When a farmer lost his land, he was no longer eligible for military service; as the number of farmers declined, the number of potential soldiers declined, as well. Also, those still eligible to serve were often no longer willing. They did not wish to go overseas for years at a time while their farms went bankrupt, especially when this new service was often garrison duty that offered no hope of substantial plunder at the end of a campaign. Service in difficult theaters such as Spain was avoided; draft dodging by legal and illegal means became more common. Only wars against weak, rich enemies, such as the Third Punic War, still managed to entice plenty of willing participants. A related problem was the large and growing number of very poor people in Rome and throughout Italy who had no livelihoods and no way to provide for their families. Many of these people were former farmers who had lost their land and had now migrated to the cities to look for some sort of employment. Gracchus passed legislation, against the will of the Senate, to grant public land to Rome's poor so that they would have a livelihood and so that they would have the necessary property qualification to be eligible for military service. This was one of the first occasions in which a *tribune* exercised the power of his office for the benefit of the people. Ultimately, Gracchus was assassinated by his enemies in the Senate. This was the first time in Republican history that political rivals resorted to violence; it would not be the last. The Roman Revolution had begun.

Tied to the political changes in Rome were dramatic reforms of the military by the time of C. Marius (107, 104–100); specifically, the last major reforms of the Republican army were carried out.²

First was the introduction of the *aquila* (a silver eagle), which would now be given to each legion as a standard and as a rallying point in an effort to increase unit morale. As time went on, the eagle came to be viewed as a symbol of the legion itself, and to lose one in battle was considered a horrible humiliation. Years later, when three Roman legions were destroyed in the German forests, the Emperor Augustus supposedly wandered around his palace crying out to the defeated general to give him back his “eagles.”

Second, the *velites* disappeared from the Roman army. No longer would Roman citizens fulfill the role of light infantry; instead, foreign auxiliaries, such as archers from Crete or slingers from the Balearic Islands, would be used exclusively.

Third, the Roman cavalry disappeared. Instead, Rome would now make use of foreign auxiliaries, from Numidia, Gaul, or Germany, to provide cavalry units.

Fourth, the Roman army would no longer be divided into three lines (*hastati, principes, triarii*). This, combined with the disappearance of the Roman *velites*, meant that now all Roman infantrymen in a legion would be heavy

infantry armed in the same way: with the *pilum*, *gladius*, helmet, shield, and cuirass.

Fifth, there was a dramatic change in tactical units. During the middle period, the *maniple* was the most important unit in Roman battles. Now the *cohort* would have that honor. The *cohort* was much larger: 480 men, to only 120 or 60 for the *maniple*. Having 10 *cohorts* allowed for far more flexibility than having 30 *maniples*, and the chain of command was simplified, as well. Now, a commander would deal with just the 10 *cohort* leaders, not the 30 commanders of the *maniple*. If there were multiple legions, this advantage would be even greater.

However, of all the military modifications made during this time, the most important for the future of the Republic was the change in Rome's recruitment methods. In 107, Marius was given command in the war against King Jugurtha in North Africa. Even though Tiberius Gracchus's land law had remained in place after his death, the shortage of eligible soldiers that he had tried to remedy 26 years earlier was again a problem. Marius had a war to fight but not enough soldiers to do so. He therefore did something that would prove revolutionary in the history of the *polis*, though at the time there was apparently no protest or opposition: he accepted volunteers into his army from among the poorest citizens of Rome (the *capite censi* or *proletarii*) who did not have sufficient wealth and who were therefore normally not eligible for military service. The state would now provide armor, weapons, and supplies while these men were on campaign. There were enough poor citizens in Italy looking for any type of economic advancement that Marius was able quickly to raise a large army of volunteers and then sail for Africa. Marius led these soldiers to victory at Cirta (106), and, with the help of his *quaestor*, L. Cornelius Sulla (cos. 88, 80), he was able to capture Jugurtha himself (105), thus ending the war. Jugurtha would walk in Marius's *triumph* and then be executed (104). A new, more serious threat then appeared beyond Rome's northern frontiers. Two German tribes, the Cimbri and the Teutones, had migrated into western Europe threatening first Rome's province of Transalpine Gaul and then Italy itself. The people recalled the sack of Rome by Gauls back in 390, the only time during the Republic a foreign army had captured Rome. To defend Italy in this emergency, constitutional niceties were forgotten. Marius was reelected *consul* for the year 104 and would continue to be reelected, in absentia, through 100, making an unprecedented six consulships in eight years. He defeated the Teutones and their allies in Transalpine Gaul at Aqua Sextiae (102) and then, moving back across the Alps into northern Italy, crushed the Cimbri, in 101. The German threat was eliminated; Marius was the hero of the hour.

When Marius returned to Rome in 100, he wished to provide for his loyal soldiers. More than 50,000 men needed to be discharged, and Marius believed it would not be prudent to simply turn these armed, unemployed ex-soldiers loose on the streets. He therefore persuaded one of the *tribunes* of 100 to propose to the assembly to distribute land to his veterans. With Marius's men on hand to vote, the law passed.

This was all very important to the Roman army and to the continuing Roman Revolution because, from now on, the army would be made up mostly of poor citizen volunteers who felt little loyalty to the Senate. The Senate had generally done little to help the average citizen of Rome; even worse, the Senate had killed people like Gracchus who had tried to introduce reform. These soldiers were often far more loyal to their general, the man who would lead them well, avoid getting them killed, provide them with plunder while on campaign, and, most important, procure them land at discharge. An important trend was beginning to emerge that would cause much trouble for Rome as the century progressed: Roman senators lusting for power and willing to do anything to avoid or reverse a political defeat now, for the first time, would have large armies more loyal to them than to the state. Some senators would be willing to use those armies against their political enemies or the Republic to protect or increase their own power, even if it meant civil war. Therefore, Marius had inadvertently created the tool that would bring down the Roman Republic.

The full ramifications of the dramatic changes in Roman army that began with T. Gracchus's tribunate in 133 and continued through Marius's multiple consulships between 107 and 100 would come to a head in the 80s. First, in 88, the *consul* L. Cornelius Sulla, after a political defeat, took his army and marched on Rome. It was the first time in the history of the Republic that a Roman general had led a Roman army to capture Rome. The precedent had now been set and would be constantly repeated. The following year, after Sulla led his army to war in the east, Rome was captured by Marius and his army. He then took bloody revenge by killing numerous political enemies. When Marius died early in his seventh consulship (86), his supporters, the "Marians," continued to rule in Rome (86–83). Though collective, this was Rome's first military dictatorship. Sulla's return in 83 sparked the first civil war in Rome's history (83–82), the first time Roman generals had led Roman armies against each other. Victory made Sulla Rome's undisputed leader. He proclaimed himself dictator and began Rome's first reign of terror, butchering those soldiers who fought against him and executing thousands of senators and equestrians. Sulla killed these men not only because of their political and military opposition but also because they were wealthy. Sulla needed to confiscate their wealth and land to give to his men to reward them for making him ruler of the Roman world. He would eventually establish 10 colonies in Italy in which he settled 120,000 of his veterans. He would remain dictator for three years (82–79), and when his reforms were completed he retired.³ He left the Senate in charge of the Republic and retired to his estates. Unfortunately for Sulla, and for the Senate, his reforms did not work. In fact, it quickly became obvious that the Roman Revolution had not been halted; instead, despite all his legislation, the deterioration of the state continued. Sulla could pass all the laws he wanted, but everyone remembered what he had done, and people knew that if they were willing to break the rules, they, too, could rule the Roman world. This possibility was simply too tempting for some Romans to pass up.

THE FIRST TRIUMVIRATE AND THE RISE OF C. JULIUS CAESAR

In 60, a political alliance was formed that would help change the course of Roman history. It included Rome's most successful and popular general, Cn. Pompeius Magnus (cos. 70, 55, 52); Rome's wealthiest man, M. Licinius Crassus (cos. 70, 55), who had crushed the slave rebellion of Spartacus in 71; and a rising politician named C. Julius Caesar (100–44). The three men formed what came to be known as the First Triumvirate, and Pompeius and Crassus pooled their resources to get Caesar elected *consul* for the year 59. Caesar, they believed, was a man who could get things done.

Caesar's Campaigns in Gaul, 58–50

While *consul*, Caesar passed laws favorable to his sponsors; once his political debts were paid, he looked to his own future. Now that he had made it to the top of the political ladder, he needed an opportunity for military glory. So he arranged for the Tribal Assembly to pass the *lex Vatinia* (named after its sponsor, one of the *tribunes*, P. Vatinus), making Caesar *proconsul* (governor) of two Roman provinces, Transalpine Gaul and Cisalpine Gaul, for five years. These grants were made even though they were against a law established by Sulla restricting the length of time a commander could be in a province. Governing a province always provided incredible economic, political, and military opportunities for Roman senators in general and in this case for Caesar in particular. He would have ample opportunities to extort money from defenseless provincial subjects to finally bring him out of debt. As *proconsul*, he would have legal immunity from prosecution in Rome, so he could not be prosecuted for his various irregular and illegal acts as *consul*. These two provinces had four legions ostensibly to keep the locals under control, but since they were also on the northern frontier of the Roman Empire, there were plenty of lands beyond for Caesar to conquer.

Caesar's campaigns in Gaul (and the subsequent Second Civil War) provide an incredible look inside an ancient army on campaign. This was largely because of Caesar's *Commentaries*, which recorded his deeds and those of his army. Many Roman generals, such as Sulla, had written brief accounts or longer autobiographies describing their military service, but Caesar's are the only works that have survived intact. The *Commentaries* on the Gallic War consisted of eight books or chapters, each of which chronicles the events of a given year, though the last book, written by his *legate* A. Hirtius (cos. 43), includes both 51 and 50. Apparently, after each year's campaigning, Caesar would write a chapter and send it to Rome, where it was widely read.

Beyond Caesar's provinces lay *Gallia Comata* ("Long-Haired Gaul"), a huge territory encompassing most of modern France, Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg and parts of Germany and Switzerland. As Caesar so famously wrote in his *Commentaries* on the Gallic campaigns, Gaul was divided into three parts, occupied by the Belgae, Celts, and Aquitani. All spoke versions of Celtic, an Indo-European language group distantly related to

Latin and Greek. By the time Caesar arrived, in 58, the Gallic tribes were no longer purely pastoralists; instead, they had begun to settle down, build cities, practice agriculture, and engage in trade, mining, and metallurgy. However, despite this new veneer of civilization, war was still vitally important to the Gauls. Politically, Gaul was divided into various tribal states led by heroic monarchs or elected magistrates. This lack of unity would aid Caesar. The Gauls were an ancient enemy of Rome due to various wars fought in northern Italy and southern Gaul, and especially because of the Gallic sack of Rome back in 390.

Caesar, from his arrival in his provinces in 58, wanted to attack Gaul but needed a pretext to invade. The movement of the Helvetii provided him with the excuse he was looking for. The Helvetii had been living in what is now Switzerland but had been forced by the arrival of even more warlike German tribes to move southwest to seek a new home in southern Gaul. All the Helvetii, men, women, and children, packed up and began to move; according to Caesar, 368,000 people altogether were displaced. Their path would take them through the northeastern tip of Caesar's Transalpine province. Here was his pretext for war; an obvious violation of Rome's territorial integrity must be prevented. Caesar originally had four legions (IX, X, XI, XII) when he arrived in his province, and he then raised two more (VII, VIII); this was illegal, since he had no authorization from Rome. He then attacked the Helvetii after they had moved through Roman territory and back into Gaul. This type of action had long been within the purview of a Roman *proconsul* who, looking for military glory and plunder, marched into foreign territory and precipitated a war. However, Sulla's laws had now made this type of unilateral act illegal; Caesar broke the law by leaving his province to start a war without authorization from the Senate or the people. These constitutional problems did not restrain Caesar; in 58, at the Battle of Bibracte, he defeated the Helvetii and ordered them to return to their original home. According to Caesar, of the 368,000 who set out on this migration, only 122,666 were still alive for the return trip. Caesar therefore admits that 245,334 of the Helvetii had died one way or another. Unfortunately, this type of incident was merely a preview of what Caesar was to inflict on the peoples of Gaul. Now that he had made it into Gaul, Caesar had no intention of leaving. Later that same year, Caesar faced a rival who also had designs on Gaul: Ariovistus. However, Ariovistus and his Germans had been named allies and friends of Rome; therefore, Caesar's attack on them was also illegal and unauthorized.

The ensuing battle at Cernay was a great Roman victory. The army lined up in the *acies triplex*, meaning that each legion was divided into 10 *cohorts* that lined up, 1 through 10, next to each other. Each *cohort* was divided into three lines, front to back, with each line consisting of one *maniple* separated by a small space from the others, and the *maniple* divided into two *centuries*, one in front and one in back. So there were actually three parallel lines of *maniples* from each cohort stretching across the battlefield. Five of Caesar's six legions were commanded by a *legate*, the sixth by the *quaestor*. Caesar was on the right, the position of honor. The German army consisted

of seven major tribes, including the Marcommani, who would cause the Romans so many problems two centuries later. The Germans had also brought with them their wives and families, who were placed on great wagons behind their line so that they could observe the coming battle; with tears and outstretched arms, the wives implored their men to win to ensure that they would not be captured and sold into slavery. Matrons carried out the proper religious divinations and declared that victory was ensured if battle was joined before the new moon. Caesar tells us the Germans rushed forward so quickly that his own men did not have time to throw their *pila* as they usually did at the outset of battle and instead immediately went to swords. The Romans overwhelmed the German left, which fled, but the Roman left was under increasing pressure from the overwhelming numbers of the German right. However, the Roman army once again proved its superior flexibility; the *praefect* P. Licinius Crassus, the son of Caesar's triumviral ally M. Crassus, had a good view from his horse of the left wing's troubles and, on his own initiative, detached the third line of *maniples* from the victorious Roman right and quickly transferred them to the Roman left. With these reinforcements, the Roman left was able to turn the tide of the battle, and the Germans eventually broke and fled. Ariovistus escaped across the Rhine, as did some others; however, both his wives were killed, as was one of his two daughters; the other was captured by Caesar.

After the battle, many Gallic tribes came over to Caesar and swore obedience to Rome. In the winter of 58–57, Caesar stationed his army at Vesontio, in Gaul, while he returned to Cisalpine Gaul to keep an eye on Roman politics (as *proconsul* Caesar was barred from coming to Rome himself or traveling beyond the Rubicon River, which was the southern boundary of his province), send money to his political allies, work on his *Commentaries*, and raise two more legions (XIII, XIV), making a total of eight.

In 57, Caesar marched into northern Gaul and fought a battle against the Belgae. Caesar's army, now numbering 40,000 men, marched north, where it was ambushed at the Sambre River. The Belgic army numbered 60,000 men and included warriors from three tribes, the Nervii, the Viromandui, and the Atrebatas. Caesar's men had been marching with six legions leading the column (VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII), followed by the baggage train and two legions of new recruits that brought up the rear (XIII, XIV). The forward legions were in "light marching order," meaning they were carrying not heavy packs but only the necessary tools of war. Caesar's officers laid out the Roman camp on a hill just north of the Sambre River, and, while the Roman legions began to fortify their camp, Caesar sent out cavalry and light infantry on reconnaissance of the surrounding area. The Belgae were in battle order, hidden in a thick forest just south of the river, with the Atrebatas on the right, the Viromandui in the center, and the Nervii on the left. When the Roman cavalry and light infantry crossed over the river and moved into the woods, they were suddenly attacked and scattered by the Belgae. The Belgae then moved quickly across the river to attack the Romans while they were at their most vulnerable, finishing a long march and constructing a camp. Caesar's men were

scattered over the whole area either working on the camp or gathering the necessary supplies. The great Caesar was taken by surprise, and he relates that he barely had time to give the necessary orders: he quickly raised the flag to call the men to arms, quickly ordered the trumpet call to his men to form up for battle, and ordered his men into a line, but, unlike other occasions, he did not have time for the proper battlefield exhortation that was expected from a Roman commander. He had time only to say a few words reminding them of their previous valor and urging them not to be panicked by the sudden enemy attack and to withstand the imminent onslaught. However, even though they had been surprised, and even though their general did not have time for proper battle preparations, the legions at the Sambre gave clear evidence of the resourcefulness of the Roman soldier and his officers. First of all, most of the men were veterans who had served at least since 63 and therefore knew what to do in such an emergency. There was no panic; instead, they quickly stopped whatever they were doing and, rather than try to find their specific *cohort* or *maniple*, simply looked for the nearest manipular standard and fell into line. Caesar's officers, especially his *legates*, such as T. Labienus, were also experienced veterans, and in this time of crisis they too did not panic, nor did they wait to receive orders from their commander. Their training and experience told them what to do, so they gathered the men together in functioning units and attacked. Despite being formed so rapidly, the Romans quickly established a rough firing line consisting of, from left to right, legions X, IX, XI, VIII, XII, and VII.

The Nervii on the left wing had moved steadily forward, attacking legions VII and XII on the Roman right. The Roman legions were driven back, suffering huge casualties; according to Caesar, his men were packed in together so tightly they did not have the proper room to maneuver and wield their swords, and the rough ground separated the various units. All the *centurions* of legion XII were wounded, and all those of the fourth *cohort* were killed, including P. Sextius Baculus, whom Caesar called "the bravest of the brave." Caesar, as he would often do when his men were faltering, waded into the thick of the fighting, wearing a scarlet cloak so that he was quickly recognized by his men. He called on his *centurions* by name to drive back the enemy, cheered on the men, and ordered them to spread out to allow for more room to fight. Caesar was able to prevent a rout or encirclement by the Nervii, but the tribe did overrun Caesar's camp. However, while things were not going well on the Roman right, they were progressing far better on the Roman left. Four legions (X, IX, XI, VIII), led by the *legate* Labienus, had swiftly recovered from their initial shock and moved over to the offensive. Their charge began on the high ground near the Roman camp; they threw their *pila* and then moved quickly downhill, driving the Atrebatres and the Viromandui back across the river and into the forest. The tribes panicked and fled, and the Romans captured their now empty camp. The camp was on high ground and offered Labienus a view of the battle in progress back across the river at the Roman camp. Labienus realized his comrades were in danger and quickly detached legion X and ordered it to go to the relief of legions VII

and XII. Legion X arrived just at the moment that the two new legions (XIII, XIV) came rushing up after having completed their march. Now suddenly, the Nervii were surrounded by five Roman legions; rather than surrender, they fought to the death. The Roman army won the Battle of the Sambre and, with this victory, broke Belgic resistance.

While Caesar fought the Belgae, his *legate* P. Crassus had marched west and conquered the coastal regions of Brittany and Normandy. Caesar's mission was seemingly accomplished: major fighting was over, Gaul conquered, and only mopping-up operations remained. A 15-day thanksgiving holiday was proclaimed in Rome; this was the longest on record, besting the 10-day thanksgiving held for Pompeius's victories in the east a decade before. In 56, Caesar, Crassus, and Pompeius met at Luca in Caesar's province to discuss the future. It was decided that Crassus and Pompeius would be *consuls* in 55 and that both would get extended provincial commands, Crassus in Syria and Pompeius in Spain. Caesar's command in Gaul was extended for five more years to allow him the necessary time to finish the conquest and organization of the province.

However, it quickly became obvious that the war still had a long way to go. Caesar would spend the next five years fighting to pacify Gaul and defend it against new external enemies:

56: Various revolts, Veneti rise in Brittany, Battle of Quiberon Bay

55: German tribes invade Gaul, Caesar crosses the Rhine and later invades Britain

54: Caesar invades Britain for a second time

53: Major revolt of Gallic tribes begins

52: Battles of Gergovia and Alesia

51: Siege of Uxellodunum

Multiple troubles arose in 56. Caesar used his officers to deal with these far-flung problems: his *legate* Labienus was sent with a legion and cavalry to the lands of the Treveri to prevent an uprising among discontented tribes in the north, P. Crassus led 12 *cohorts* and cavalry to conquer Aquitania, and the *legate* Q. Titurius Sabinus led three legions against tribes in Normandy and Brittany. The biggest problem was the revolt of the Veneti because, almost alone of the Gallic tribes, they possessed a large fleet of 220 heavy, tall ships made of oak for use in the Atlantic. The lighter Mediterranean ships of Rome could not puncture the hulls of these Gallic vessels. However, the Gallic ships relied entirely on sails, and, in the naval battle of Quiberon Bay, the Roman admiral D. Junius Brutus, later one of Caesar's assassins, used hooks to grab the enemy masts and pull them down. The Romans then boarded the ships and won the battle. Caesar executed the Veneti leaders and sold the entire tribe into slavery. This type of punishment was typical of Caesar's campaigns in Gaul and was done not only to terrorize the Gallic population into submission but also to generate revenues. The formerly poor Caesar would have no further financial worries.

The year 55 brought new challenges and new opportunities for Caesar to impress the people back in Italy. Two German tribes, the Usipetes and the

Tencteri, crossed the Rhine into Gaul. Caesar ordered them to return; they refused and, in the ensuing battle, were defeated. Caesar then chased down all the survivors and their families until they were trapped at the confluence of the Moselle and the Rhine; the Romans slaughtered 430,000 men, women, and children. This brought a public rebuke from Rome, as Caesar's bitterest political enemy, M. Porcius Cato (pr. 54), labeled Caesar's action a war crime and demanded that he be prosecuted when his office expired.

After the victory, Caesar decided to make a military demonstration in Germany that would also play well in Italy. In 10 days, Caesar's *fabri* (engineers) built a bridge across the Rhine River, and for the first time ever a Roman army crossed over onto German soil. Caesar ravaged the country for 18 days and then returned over the Rhine, pulling down the bridge behind him. Caesar, though, was not done. The Britons, according to Caesar, had been helping various Gallic tribes in their revolts against Rome, so Caesar decided to cross the channel and punish them. Besides his stated reason for the crossing, there was the economic potential of a plundering expedition, and, even more important, there was the incredible publicity and fame his actions would generate in Rome. To the Romans, Britain was literally at the ends of the earth, and no Roman army had ever gone so far. Caesar brought with him legions VII and X, but the ships carrying his cavalry were delayed. This would prove costly, for when Caesar arrived near Dover, he could see enemy soldiers lining the famous white cliffs. Caesar moved further along the channel coast, but the Britons then moved down to the beach to repulse Caesar's invasion. This was one of the few instances in ancient history that there was a D-Day type of amphibious landing on an occupied coastal beach. The Britons' cavalry and chariots rode into the waves to oppose the Roman landings. The Roman ships ran aground far from the beach, and the Roman soldiers were forced to jump into the deep water rocked by the channels' tides and surf, which were far stronger than those of the Mediterranean. When the soldiers hesitated to leave the ships, the *aquilifer* (the soldier who carried the eagle standard of the legion) of legion X, after a quick prayer, jumped overboard first, crying out, "Leap down soldiers, unless you wish to betray your eagle to the enemy; it shall be said that I did my duty to the Republic and to my general."⁴

The other soldiers could not bear the shame or the thought of losing the eagle and therefore overcame their fears and followed. Soldiers on the other ships who saw this did likewise. The Britons charged while the Roman soldiers were wet, unable to stand firmly, unable to form a proper battleline in the surf, and without their own cavalry support. They did have artillery missiles, slingstones, and arrows, which were fired from the ships, over their heads, into the onrushing Britons. The Romans still suffered tremendous casualties as they struggled ashore, but, once there, once they were able to fight on dry land, the battle turned. The enemy cavalry was driven off, and the beach was finally secured. Caesar stayed only briefly and did not venture far inland. He was able to gain the (temporary) obedience of some of the local tribes, which swore loyalty to the Republic and to Caesar. Though Britain was

by no means conquered, the news of his invasion was well received back in Rome.

Caesar would return the following year (54) with a much larger army (five legions, 2,000 Gallic cavalry) and a much larger fleet consisting of ships built for the rigors of the channel. He fought a number of small battles against various tribes until finally defeating the most powerful king, Cassivellaunus of the Catuvellauni. Caesar advanced as far as the Thames, imposed tribute, and took hostages. This invasion also did not result in the annexation of Britain; no Roman soldiers were left behind, and almost the minute Caesar was gone, the various tribes ignored their various promises. It would be 97 years before Caesar's sister's great-great-grandson, Claudius, Rome's fourth emperor, would finally conquer Britain in 43 C.E. However, even though the expedition did not result in any significant economic gain or addition to the empire, Caesar's exploits at the end of the world brought him greater glory in Rome.

Meanwhile, the winter of 54–53 was a time of rising discontent in Gaul. Bad harvests and the need to feed thousands of Roman soldiers led to food shortages, sparking new revolts among some of the tribes. A legion (XIV) encamped in the land of the Eborones was wiped out by a Gallic army. Undeterred, Caesar moved quickly to demonstrate to the Gauls that Rome's resources were virtually unlimited: he raised two new legions (VI, XIV), and borrowed another from Pompeius (I). He then divided up his soldiers into smaller units and sent them to terrorize the Nervii, Senones, Menapii, Triveri, and Eborones by destroying property and crops, seizing animals, seizing hostages, and killing people outright. These methods only served to inflame the Gallic tribes, sparking an even bigger uprising in 53–52. The Gauls finally found a leader, Vercingetorix, of the Arvernian tribe, who was able to unify a number of tribes for a great war of liberation against Rome. The revolt began well; a Roman attack on the Gallic *oppidum* (fortified hilltop city) of Gergovia failed, and the Romans were repulsed with heavy losses. This Gallic victory induced other tribes to revolt, including the Aedui. Vercingetorix and his army of 80,000 then moved north from Gergovia to Alesia. Alesia lay on a steep hill, guarded on two sides by rivers; Vercingetorix established his camp next to the city. He hoped to lure Caesar to Alesia and induce him to begin a siege. Meanwhile, he had ordered a relief army of 250,000 men from more than 50 Gallic tribes to arrive a short time later, hoping to trap the Romans between the two forces.

Caesar knew that he needed to defeat Vercingetorix before the revolt spiraled completely out of control. He arrived at Alesia to find the original Gallic army encamped on top of the hill and quickly realized that an attack uphill against that force would be impossible. He decided that the only way to defeat the Gauls was to lay siege to the entire hill until a lack of supplies forced a surrender. Knowing that the Gallic relief army was on the way, Caesar would have to build not only one defense line to keep the Gauls at Alesia in but also another to keep the second Gallic army out. In a matter of days, Caesar's men built fortifications around the hill 11 miles long to blockade

Alesia and another, outer line 14 miles long to defend against the second Gallic army. The lines were protected by deep trenches, one of which was flooded by water from the rivers. The dirt from the trenches was used to build a palisade 12 feet high with a wooden wall on top. Roman artillery, both *ballista*, which fired stones, and *scorpions*, which shot various types of arrows, was placed along the wall. In front of the defenses, firmly planted in the ground, were sharp hooks, spikes, and wooden stakes. Attacking Gauls would, of course, be able to step around these landmines, but they could do so only by moving very slowly and very carefully, making them easy targets for Roman archers, slingers, and artillery. Caesar placed eight camps, 23 small forts, and numerous three- and four-story towers along the lines to allow sentries to keep watch. Caesar's men had brought sufficient grain and fodder for themselves and for the animals to last for one month, meaning they could hold out for a long time and that they would not have to make dangerous excursions outside the fortifications to acquire the necessary supplies. Vercingetorix had tried to hinder the Roman building projects, but his men were driven off by the Roman artillery and restricted by a trench 20 feet deep between the two rivers. The Gauls were forced to retreat and await, with dwindling supplies, their comrades. When the huge relief army appeared to the west of Alesia, the Gauls launched simultaneous attacks, one during the day and the next at night. Caesar's men had all been assigned specific places on the defensive lines, so, when attacks came, there was no confusion, and they knew exactly where to go. Caesar effectively moved units from one place to another; when Caesar was not present, his *legates*, on their own authority, did the same.

After their first two attacks failed, the Gauls readied themselves for one last great effort to break the Roman lines. The simultaneous attacks produced two breakthroughs. The Romans seemed to be wavering as the men on the line could only hear but not see what was going on elsewhere and knew, as Caesar said, "that their safety depended on the success of others . . . what is out of sight disturbs men's minds more than what they see."⁵

At one breach, Caesar sent D. Brutus with some *cohorts* to help the defenders, and when this was not sufficient he sent his *legate* C. Fabius with more *cohorts*. This, too, was not enough, so Caesar himself intervened with more reinforcements, and, inspired by their commander, the Romans gained renewed heart and drove the Gauls out. To another breach he sent Labienus with six *cohorts*. When this was not sufficient, Labienus gathered 40 *cohorts* from the surrounding areas, and Caesar quickly grabbed other *cohorts* and cavalry units and moved to the spot. Caesar records that his arrival was known to all because of the *paludamentum* (scarlet cloak). A fierce battle ensued; then suddenly, Caesar's cavalry units, which he had ordered to secretly leave the entrenchments, appeared in the Gauls' rear. Surrounded, the Gauls broke and fled. The army in Alesia, its food running low, surrendered. Vercingetorix was taken prisoner; he would be held in Italy for six years until finally, in 46, he was forced to walk in Caesar's Gallic *triumph*, after which he was strangled. All his soldiers were given as slaves to Caesar's men.

One last stronghold still remained: Uxellodunum. It was situated on a hill with steep cliffs, and the people in the town had ample supplies of food and a spring just outside the city walls to provide water. In 51, Caesar brought an army to the city and quickly realized a direct assault would not work, so he decided on an ingenious solution; his men secretly dug tunnels that diverted the water of the spring. When the people of Uxellodunum saw their reliable spring suddenly run dry, they were convinced that this was a sign from the gods and surrendered. Caesar then decided to send (another) message to the Gauls to prevent future similar uprisings: "While granting them their lives, he cut off the hands of all who had borne arms against Rome, to demonstrate the penalties for evildoers."⁶

The survivors of Uxellodunum were then forced to wander all over Gaul so that all could see them to serve as a warning for the future.

Caesar called a summit of Gallic chieftains, who all swore loyalty to Rome. After nearly seven years of continuous fighting, Gaul was conquered. The costs had been horrendous; possibly a million Gauls had died during the fighting, and maybe another million had been sold into slavery. Gaul would now become part of the Roman Empire and would remain prosperous and relatively peaceful for the next 500 years. Caesar received many important benefits as a result of his campaigns. First, he was now Rome's most popular general, thanks in large part to his *Commentaries*. Second, Caesar became incredibly rich by plundering Gaul and enslaving many of its inhabitants. Third, making use of his military glory and his newfound wealth, Caesar became one of Rome's most important politicians, even though he was out of the city after 58. Fourth, during his time in Gaul, Caesar developed into a great general. Fifth, and most important, by 50 Caesar had a large, well-trained, experienced army, specifically 10 veteran legions (V–XIV). The men were loyal to Caesar and would literally follow him anywhere. All these factors would have huge repercussions in the years to follow.

THE SECOND CIVIL WAR, 49–45

In 49, Caesar's political enemies, led by his old friend Pompeius (Crassus had died in battle in Parthia in 53), alarmed at his growing power, moved against him. In a series of moves of questionable constitutionality, Caesar was ordered to give up his provinces and army at the beginning of 49. When Caesar rejected the ultimatum, a *Senatus Consultum Ultimum* ("The Ultimate Decree of the Senate") was passed by the Senate on January 7, essentially declaring Caesar a public enemy and authorizing Pompeius to use any means necessary to save the Roman state. Caesar decided to seize the initiative. On January 11, 49, Caesar led one legion (XIII) across the Rubicon River, the border between his province of Cisalpine Gaul and the rest of Italy to the south. By this action, he officially rebelled against the state. Knowing that the future would be both difficult and unpredictable, Caesar exclaimed as he crossed the river, "Let the die be cast!"⁷

Rome's second civil war had begun.

The importance of this civil war is again known through the survival of eyewitness accounts of the campaigns. For the first part of the war (49–48) we have the autobiography of Caesar himself. For the African War (46), an anonymous, low-ranking officer in Caesar's army wrote an account of the campaign. And, last, a history of the campaign in Spain (45) was written by a *miles*, a common soldier, in Caesar's army. These works provide an incredible view of this war, and Roman war in general, from three distinct vantage points: from the point of view of the general, an officer, and the common soldier. The last two may represent the only works of their kinds written by low-ranking soldiers that have survived from ancient times.

Pompeius and the Senate were caught by surprise by the speed of Caesar's movements. They did not have sufficient soldiers to defend Rome and had apparently expected Caesar to simply back down because they controlled four loyal armies in Spain, Greece, North Africa, and Anatolia. Now Caesar quickly marched across the Rubicon with legion XIII, which had been wintering in Cisalpine Gaul. He ordered two more legions to follow (XII, VIII) and raised three more legions consisting of new recruits. Pompeius and the Senate quickly evacuated Rome and fled to Greece.

The next year, in 48, Caesar crossed to Greece to confront Pompeius with seven veteran legions. It was a daring effort carried out in rough winter seas as Pompeius's *legates* patrolled with 300 ships and soldiers guarded the important harbors and coastlines to block Caesar's arrival. M. Antonius ran the blockade later in the spring with four more legions, three of veterans and one of recruits (XXVII). Legion XXVII was sent to Achaea under the command of Caesar's *legate* Q. Fufius Calenus to win over Greek cities to Caesar's cause.

The Campaign in Greece and the Battle of Pharsalus, 48

Pompeius was at Asparagium with an army of nine legions, roughly 35,000 men gathered from Rome's eastern provinces. These were supplemented by light armed troops, such as Cretan archers, and 7,000 cavalry. Pompeius enjoyed extensive support in the east thanks to his great successes there during the 60s, and he had the active aid of numerous friendly client-kings. Pompeius also had with him a large majority of the senators; more than 200 joined him due to personal friendship or because they believed it was Caesar who had acted unconstitutionally in precipitating the civil war.

With his veteran army now reassembled, Caesar marched north to confront Pompeius at Asparagium. Caesar needed a quick victory; he was very short of supplies, his enemies controlled the seas, and the surrounding countryside could not support his men. He feared he could not hold out long. After a two-day march, he arrived near Pompeius, and the next morning he offered battle by forming up his lines opposite Pompeius's camp. Pompeius, though, was not in such a hurry. He had, as always, planned well; he had stockpiled numerous supplies in the area, and his fleet controlled the seas, allowing him if necessary to bring in supplies by boat. Pompeius

did not accept battle, so Caesar decided he must find another way to lure him into a decisive engagement. He pretended to lead his men east but then took a long detour north and west around and out of sight of Pompeius's position, heading for Dyrrachium. This city was controlled by Pompeius's forces and held vital supplies: food, money, missiles, weapons, and *ballista*, among other things. Caesar hoped to seize the supplies for his own army and to induce Pompeius to fight to protect it. Pompeius was initially unaware of Caesar's maneuver, but like all good generals he had scouts patrolling in every direction, and they informed him of Caesar's movement. Now the race was on, as both armies attempted to reach Dyrrachium. Making only one brief stop at night, Caesar, who was right there with his men urging them on, reached the city first. He could not break in, so he encamped just to the west of the city, blocking Pompeius's route. Pompeius halted and built a camp on the hill at Petra, which provided good protection and access to the sea. Caesar's supply shortage was acute, as the rugged country did not produce much food and it had already been plundered by Pompeius. Caesar had to force a battle, so he decided on a maneuver similar to that used at Alesia; he began to build a line of fortification that would eventually stretch 17 miles along a circle of hills that surrounded Pompeius's camps. Caesar hoped that, with Pompeius's soldiers confined inside the lines, it would be easier for his own troops to forage for fodder and food outside and that it would be more difficult for Pompeius to forage. Most important, he hoped that Pompeius would not endure this blow to his prestige by allowing his army to be shut in. Also, though Pompeius still controlled the seas, an evacuation would be hazardous and ignominious, especially in the face of a smaller enemy. Pompeius would lose respect, and maybe not only Greek cities but also Roman soldiers might desert his cause. Caesar hoped that Pompeius would rather fight. Pompeius, though, did not fight but instead built his own line of fortifications 15 miles in length along the inside of Caesar's. Both sides raced to complete these lines, Caesar attempting to surround Pompeius, Pompeius attempting to keep an opening to the south by building lines Caesar could not get around. Skirmishes broke out constantly; Pompeius's army was especially effective in the use of archers, slingers, and missile engines to keep Caesar's men at bay. Pompeius's archers were so effective that Caesar's men went to great lengths to protect themselves from the arrows, such as wearing thick hides or wadded up clothes under their tunics. Pompeius's men were still able to import supplies, while Caesar's men were reduced to eating barley rather than wheat, vegetables, or meat. The two lines were close enough for taunting, and when Pompeius's men made fun of their opponent's lack of food, Caesar's men hit them with their loaves of chara root bread, which they were now forced to eat. When Pompeius discovered what Caesar's men had been reduced to eating, he could not believe they still held out, exclaiming, "I am fighting wild beasts!"⁸

To put pressure on Pompeius, Caesar dammed the various streams that brought water into Pompeius's camp, and his own men dug wells, which provided water for a short time.

Pompeius attempted to break out, launching simultaneous attacks on three of Caesar's forts blocking the way to Dyrrachium. Caesar's men were able to fight off their attackers, but the events at one of Caesar's forts illustrate the brutal nature of ancient warfare. According to Caesar, every soldier in this fort was wounded in some way. Four of the six *centurions* lost eyes. When the fighting was over, the men collected 30,000 enemy arrows that had been fired into the fort, a testament to the logistical ability of Pompeius and to the ability of Caesar's men to withstand such an attack. One *centurion*, Scaeva, had 120 holes in his shield from enemy arrows. Caesar always rewarded such bravery; Scaeva received 200,000 *sesterces* and was promoted from the eighth rank of the centurionate to the first. Every man in the *cohort* received double wages, extra corn, clothing, and military decorations.

Pompeius launched another attack, inspired by two deserters from Caesar's army, Roucillus and Egus, Gauls from the Allobroges tribe. These men were privy to many of Caesar's councils, and they provided Pompeius with valuable information. In this era before binoculars or telescopes, it was often difficult to discover even basic information about the enemy, but the Gauls told Pompeius the routine and timetables of the camp, the distances between the forts, which officers were competent and which were not, and which guard posts they commanded and also described the weaknesses in the line, and, most important, the gap in the southern part of the fortifications near the sea, which Caesar had not yet completed.

Pompeius decided to strike with 60 *cohorts* while light troops were put on swift boats to launch an amphibious assault on the enemy rear. The attack was launched at dawn against legion IX, which was encamped near the sea and was guarding this part of the line. Caesar's rampart was 10 feet wide and protected by a ditch 15 feet deep. Pompeius's soldiers immediately moved up and began to use earth and wood to fill in the ditch and ladders to climb up onto the ramparts. They were supported by archers, *ballista*, and missiles firing from the boats. Caesar's men had only stones to fire back, another effect of broken supply lines, and even these were negated by the wicker coverings Pompeius had ordered his men to place on their helmets. Caesar's men gave way and dissolved in panic, during which legion IX's *aquilifer* (bearer of the legion's eagle-standard) was seriously wounded and cried out:

I have faithfully guarded this eagle for many years and now, dying, I restore it, with equal faithfulness to Caesar. I beg you not to allow our military honor to be disgraced, something that has never happened before in Caesar's army, and bear the eagle to him safely.⁹

The eagle was saved, but many men were lost, including all but one of the *centurions* of the first *cohort*. M. Antonius, seeing the rout, quickly moved to the spot with 12 *cohorts* to support the troops and sent a message by smoke signal that jumped from fort to fort to Caesar. Caesar marched with 33 *cohorts*, taking an indirect route so as to approach the position unseen by the enemy. Once he arrived, along with Antonius's men, he was able to turn the tide of battle. His surprise attack drove Pompeius's forces off the rampart. Caesar's

men then attacked the gate, which, though guarded by a hedgehog (a wood beam with sharp spikes), they were able to breach.

However, just when it seemed as if Caesar had snatched victory from the jaws of defeat, Pompeius suddenly arrived with five legions and cavalry in battle order. As Caesar laconically described it, his men, now vastly outnumbered, dissolved in "turmoil, panic, rout." Even Caesar's veterans joined in the flight, trampling and killing their own comrades in an effort to get away. In the battle, Caesar lost 960 dead, roughly 4 percent of his total forces, including 32 military *tribunes* and *centurions*, most of whom were crushed to death in the soldiers' panic to get away. At that moment, a massive follow-up attack by Pompeius might have ended the war. But, as Caesar said, "our army was saved from destruction" by Pompeius's hesitation. His unwillingness to pursue Caesar's now seemingly broken army allowed Caesar and his men to escape, regroup, and fight another day. Pompeius was hailed by his soldiers as *Imperator*; Labienus executed all the captive soldiers, and Pompeius's followers were now generally convinced that the war was over.

Caesar, of course, did not agree. He told his men that Pompeius had won only a minor victory because of the terrain, the confined spaces within the fortifications in which the battle was fought, and the division of Caesar's army. Most of all, Caesar said that Pompeius had forgotten the cardinal rule of ancient warfare: a decisive victory on the battlefield was *always* necessary for victory in a war: "They [Pompeius's forces] did not consider that there had been no decisive encounter, no battle."¹⁰

Caesar now realized that his efforts at Dyrrachium had failed, and he decided to march east to more fertile lands. First, though, he gathered his army together at a *contio* to try to restore their fighting spirit. He told them not to be afraid, this was only one small setback; he then reminded them of their success in Italy, Spain, and in Gaul, where there was a "small" setback at Gergovia, followed by the decisive victory at Alesia. Then he told his men that he, Caesar, was not to blame for the defeat. He said he had chosen favorable ground to fight, and he had captured the enemy camp. Either it was the fault of the men for letting a victory that was in their hands slip away, or it was just plain bad luck, or fate, that had brought about the defeat. He then censured and demoted the *signifers* (standard bearers) who had fled during the battle. After his performance, Caesar's men were angry and upset, not at their general for blaming them for the defeat but at themselves for letting Caesar down. They begged Caesar for an immediate attack on Pompeius's army to provide an opportunity for redemption. Caesar was happy that they seemed willing to fight but believed it was too soon. His army marched for Thessaly. That night he ordered his baggage train, protected by one legion, to move out first, silently, followed by seven more legions and then the last two, which had remained in camp tending fires and making noise to cover the army's departure for as long as possible. This type of marching column also ensured that Caesar's soldiers would be unencumbered by their baggage, which would be safely out ahead, should an attack come. Each night, Caesar continued to march in this manner and moved quickly enough to eventually outpace the pursuing army.

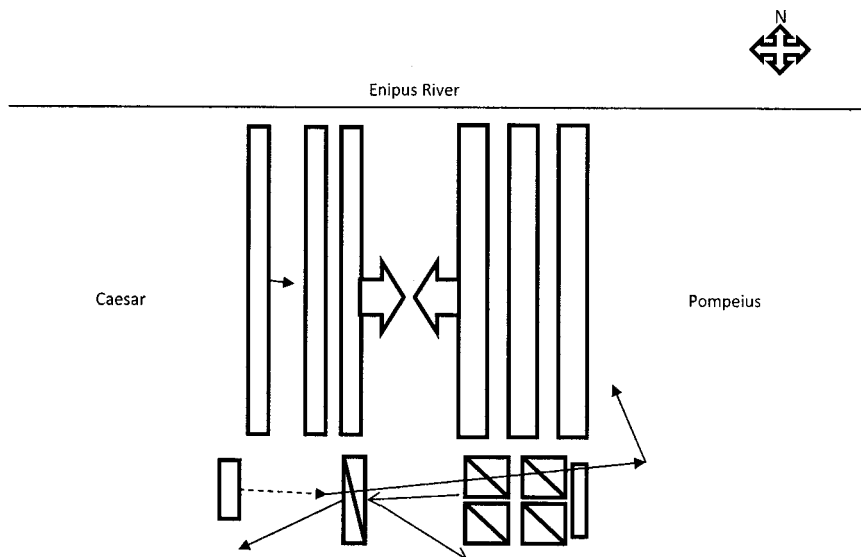
Moving down into Thessaly, he came first to the city of Gomphi. Like most people in Greece, the citizens of Gomphi had heard of Caesar's debacle at Dyracchium and believed that Pompeius, who was named Magnus for his great victories in the east, would win the war. Gomphi shut its gates to Caesar, refusing to give him aid. Caesar attacked and destroyed the city, prompting other towns in the area to quickly offer help. Caesar also allowed his men to drink all the wine of Gomphi, and this drunkenness seemed to dramatically improve their mood after the difficult conditions at Dyracchium. Pompeius eventually followed Caesar into Thessaly, and the two armies encamped near the town of Pharsalus.

Caesar was still desperate for a decisive battle, so he led his men out of their fortifications a short distance from his camp and drew them up for battle in an attempt to entice Pompeius. Pompeius refused; having encamped on a hill he apparently wanted Caesar to move further from his own camp and closer to Pompeius's so that he would have the advantage of the terrain. Each day, Caesar ventured out from his own ramparts until his army was near to Pompeius's hill. Skirmishes were constant between the two armies. Pompeius finally decided to accept battle, in large part to quiet the 200 senators in his camp who believed Caesar was as good as beaten and who were agitating for a quick victory and a return home. Pompeius held a *consilium* to explain his plan of battle and promised victory; Labienus followed by telling the officers that Caesar's army was but a shadow of its former self, decimated by disease, years of service, and endless battles such as the recent fight at Dyrrachium. Labienus assured his listeners that Caesar's army was on the eve of its doom.

Finally, the two greatest generals of the late Republic met in battle. Pompeius led out his army, consisting of 110 *cohorts* (45,000 men and 7,000 cavalry). Because the right wing of his infantry was protected by the River Enipus, Pompeius placed all of his cavalry on his left. As he had explained to his men, his cavalry, nearly four times as large as Caesar's, would crush Caesar's right cavalry wing and then hit Caesar's infantry from the sides and from behind. Caesar had 80 *cohorts* consisting of 22,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry. Caesar put his entire cavalry on his right wing to oppose Pompeius's, and he divided up his infantry into the usual triple line, but he also hid a fourth infantry line behind his cavalry as a reserve (see Figure 9.1). In his speech before the battle, Caesar reminded his men of their exemplary service and assured them that he done all that he could to spare them the rigors and dangers of another campaign but that his enemies had forced him into war. When Caesar ordered the attack, a veteran named C. Crastinus cried out, "Follow me and give your general the service you have promised. Only this one battle remains, after it he will recover his position and we are freedom. . . . General [he said to Caesar] today I shall earn your gratitude either dead or alive."¹¹

Caesar then ordered his first two lines of infantry forward, but Pompeius made no move; he wanted Caesar's men to charge uphill and tire themselves out. Caesar's experienced men realized this and stopped to rest before they came into contact with the enemy. Then, they sped forward, threw their *pila*, drew their swords, and crashed into Pompeius's line. Meanwhile, Pompeius's

Figure 9.1
Battle of Pharsalus, 48



cavalry, archers, and slingers had charged down the hill into Caesar's right wing, which slowly began to give ground. Caesar then ordered his fourth line into action, and it appeared so suddenly that it caught Pompeius's cavalry by surprise. Caesar's men aimed for the riders' faces, and this so terrified them that they broke and fled. Left defenseless, the archers and slingers were butchered. With Pompeius's left wing dead or gone, Caesar's fourth line wheeled north and crashed into the flanks and rear of their enemy. At the same time, Caesar ordered his third infantry line to rotate in, allowing the first two infantry lines to withdraw; this was a very difficult maneuver to pull off when engaged in battle but one Caesar's seasoned veterans were able to accomplish. Faced with fresh infantry in front and the enveloping action of the fourth line on the sides and behind, Pompeius's infantry now also turned and ran. Caesar's men captured Pompeius's camp. Altogether Pompeius lost 15,000 men killed and 24,000 captured; Caesar claims to have lost only 200 men. According to Plutarch, one of the dead was Crastinus, who was killed when he was "stabbed through the mouth with such force that the sword came out the back of his neck." Pompeius fled to Egypt, where he was assassinated by agents of the king, Ptolemy XIII.¹² Pompeius's soldiers were spared and incorporated into Caesar's army, as were his officers as part of Caesar's policy of *clementia* (mercy), which meant that, unlike Sulla, Caesar did not execute his defeated enemies. Caesar, looking over the battlefield and seeing thousands of Roman bodies, again blamed the war on his enemies: "They [his senatorial enemies] made this happen. If I had dismissed my army as

they demanded, I, Gaius Caesar, after all my victories, would have been condemned in their law courts.”¹³

Pharsalus demonstrated how a good Roman general like Caesar could influence the outcome of a battle. Before the battle, he issued specific orders to the various army units. He told his infantry to throw their *pila* and then close with swords. He mixed in light infantry with his cavalry, foot soldiers who could move quickly and keep up with men on horseback, thereby evening the cavalry odds. He met with the soldiers in his fourth line and ordered them to specifically aim for the faces of the horsemen, and he gave them a pep talk, explaining that the entire battle would turn on their bravery. Last, he told all his men not to advance until he raised the signal flag. Once the battle began, Caesar made three specific moves. First, the signal flag went up, ordering the first two infantry lines forward. These men charged toward Pompeius's lines, but, as noted earlier, the lines did not move. Caesar faults Pompeius, saying that a commander should never hold his men back but should instead encourage their desire for battle by allowing them to charge forward and to yell their war cries. When Caesar's two lines realized their enemy was not charging downhill to meet them, they paused, stopping to rest before making the final plunge into battle. This was not ordered by Caesar; since the men had already been committed, it would have been very difficult for their general to bring them to a halt. However, Caesar had reliable subordinates, military *tribunes* and *centurions* who, without a direct command from Caesar, were able to adjust in midbattle. Their experience also ensured that they were not carried away in the heat of battle and were able to follow their superiors' commands. Second, Caesar was not on the front line leading a charge like Alexander; instead, he was behind the line in a position that provided him a commanding view of the battlefield and allowed him to see the battle develop and to move units accordingly. He could therefore see his right wing giving ground, so he gave the signal for his hidden fourth line to move to the attack. Last, Caesar gave the order for the third line to relieve the first two infantry lines.

Despite Crastinus's prophecy, victory at Pharsalus and Pompeius's death did not end the civil war. Senatorial armies remained in Anatolia, North Africa, and a new one popped up in Spain. However, Caesar spent the next year (48–47) in Egypt; he deposed Ptolemy XIII (who disappeared a short time later) and replaced him with his sister, the famous Cleopatra. She eventually gave birth to a son by Caesar who was named Ptolemy XV Caesarion.

Finally, in 47, Caesar resumed the civil war, moving first to Anatolia, where he quickly defeated his enemies at the Battle of Zela. This battle is probably most famous because of Caesar's laconic description, “Veni, vidi, vici!” (I came, I saw, I conquered!).

Food and Water: The Campaign in North Africa, 46

From Anatolia, Caesar first moved to Italy to quell a major mutiny among his veteran soldiers in 47 and then moved on in 46 to North Africa, where his opponents had managed to gather a large army. The best account of this

campaign comes not from Caesar but from an unknown junior officer in his army. In the *African War*, this author gives us a inside look into the workings of the army and the problems it experienced that might normally have been kept hidden by Caesar. Specifically, through his account we see the vital importance of securing food and water, something that was a priority for all ancient generals and their men.

The main staple of the Roman soldiers' diet was wheat, which was either combined with milk or water to make a sort of porridge or was made into bread. When wheat was not available, much-despised barley would be substituted. Further ingredients of the soldiers' diet included meat (usually salted pork), cheese, salt, lentils and beans, and olive oil. Generally, the soldiers prepared their own meals in camp. Water was very difficult for an army to carry, at least in great quantities, so it was usually necessary to camp near a dependable supply of water, such as a river or a spring. Roman soldiers also drank sour wine, which was a good source of calories, and vinegar, which was an important source of vitamin C. Needless to say, a lack of food would inhibit the army's ability to fight, and it would inhibit it very quickly; within two or three days, the lack of sufficient calories would begin to decrease the physical and mental capacity of the men. Liquids were even more vital; soldiers could go weeks with little food, but without water death would ensue in a matter of days. Nutrition and hydration were also important for the horses and other animals upon which the army depended. Water and fodder had to be found for the animals to drink and eat. The fodder usually derived from the lands in which an army found itself; the larger the area the army controlled, the larger the area in which the animals could safely graze.

The author of the *African War* gives a detailed account of the campaign, and almost the entire narrative is concerned with securing suitable supplies. Caesar arrived in Africa with only a small force of 3,000 infantry and 150 cavalry.¹⁴ He and his army had made a difficult winter crossing from Sicily, and the rough seas inhibited reinforcements and supplies from easily reaching them. Because he sailed so quickly and because of the bad weather, his first priority was to secure a base for his men and to find needed supplies.

This would be difficult since the province and all the major towns were held by his enemies, both Roman and native. The enemy army was led by Q. Caecilius Metellus Pius Scipio (cos. 52).¹⁵ He had been in North Africa since fleeing from Pharsalus in 48 and had spent his time before Caesar's arrival bringing the province's food inside the fortified cities and ravaging the remaining lands so that they would be no use to the enemy. He and his supporters controlled all the important towns that served as supply depots; cities such as Uzitta provided his men with both food and water.

Caesar therefore made camp outside Ruspina on January 1, 46. A number of cities did promise to help him, especially with supplies, but apparently this was not sufficient. Caesar immediately ordered his ships to sail to Sardinia and other provinces to bring in supplies, he ordered his *praetor*

C. Sallustius Crispus, the future historian, to the island of Cercina to gather food, and he led out his men to force nearby villages to hand over provisions. When reinforcements arrived on January 4, Caesar quickly demonstrated the difficult supply situation: he led out troops personally to gather food, and this was not a small raiding party but 30 *cohorts* (roughly three full legions), 400 cavalry, and 150 archers. As soldiers moved further from camp, they moved beyond the range of artillery weapons, beyond the immediate help of their comrades, and beyond a place of refuge. Therefore, the further they had to go to get supplies, the more dangerous it became. This was especially true in Africa because Caesar had so few cavalrymen, while his enemies had local auxiliary units that were both numerous and experienced. Caesar was attacked by a contingent of enemy cavalry led by T. Labienus, Caesar's old officer, who had fought against him at Pharsalus and who had ended up in Africa. Using a new style of fighting that combined cavalry with light infantry and archers, Labienus inflicted a minor defeat on Caesar.

Caesar's supply problem continued to grow more serious. Enemy cavalry, still numerically and qualitatively superior to Caesar's, roamed outside Caesar's camp, ready to pick off any soldier who ventured beyond the fortifications to gather food or water. Caesar's animals were suffering as well, since he controlled only six square miles of African territory, not enough for the animals to graze, especially with the enemy nearby. With food becoming scarcer, the price rose, making it very difficult to offer proper economic compensation in return. Caesar tried forcing the locals into handing over food, but there apparently was very little to go around. Those natives inside cities, alongside Scipio's garrisons, were safe from Caesar's retaliation. Even cities such as Thysdra, which apparently wanted to help Caesar, were prevented by Scipio's garrison from doing so. The 300,000 measures of wheat in the city would instead be used to feed Scipio's men. Even nature would not cooperate; a violent rainstorm helped to ruin much of the food Caesar's army did possess. The serious supply difficulties led to strict rationing inside Caesar's camp. Lack of supplies always had a detrimental effect on the men, physically and also psychologically, as such hardships caused them to lose hope. Supply shortages often dictated a commander's strategy and forced him to make decisions he might not otherwise have made and to take risks he would not otherwise have taken. Caesar was now desperate to force his enemy into a decisive battle, so he marched southwest to Uzitta. Scipio had encamped next to the city; he was hoping that as Caesar's supplies dwindled, he would be forced to attack here. The longer the wait before the battle, the greater the advantages Scipio's well-supplied men would have. Also, his camp was on a hill in rough lands, and if Caesar tried to attack the camp, the city itself would be in his rear, exposing his army to an attack from behind. When Caesar arrived, he attempted to entice Scipio down into the plain, but Scipio refused to accept battle on Caesar's terms, although skirmishes were constant. Caesar's camp near Uzitta was not near a reliable water supply, so Caesar was finally forced to retreat.

An efficient intelligence network to locate the source of food and water was, of course, invaluable. Caesar was fortunate at this moment that he was informed that the people of North Africa often constructed underground cellars in which to protect food from armies like Caesar's. Caesar sent out two legions, which discovered many of these secret stashes and returned with grain. These provisions did not last long, and Caesar was again forced to lead out his soldiers in person to secure various goods, including wheat, barley, oil, and wine. However, with Caesar's army growing larger with reinforcements, and hence with more mouths to feed, the supply problem was continuous. Caesar therefore moved next against Zeta to find provisions, but on his return he and his army were ambushed and Caesar was trapped for 10 hours in a location where his men and animals were without water. Caesar's enemies had succeeded in maneuvering him into a position that might force him to surrender due to lack of supplies. Only a desperate attack enabled Caesar and his men to fight their way out. Despite his escape, Caesar was still at loss as to what to do. He could not attack Scipio's camp because Scipio would have access to food and water, while Caesar would not. He could not try to capture other towns such as Thysdra for the same reason: there were no local sources of water and food, and they were too far inland for him to transport the necessary supplies by land through enemy-infested country. Finally, Caesar found a way to bring about the battle he so desperately needed. On the night of April 4, Caesar left his camp at Aggar and marched 16 miles northeast to the city of Thapsus. Thapsus was loyal to Scipio, with a garrison commanded by C. Vergilius. Caesar immediately began building siegeworks around the city. Caesar had finally found something to force a battle; Scipio could not abandon his provincial supporters, nor could he abandon Vergilius and his soldiers.

The Battle of Thapsus was fought on a narrow plain west of the city between the Mediterranean on one side and a lake on the other. Therefore, Scipio's main strength, his superior cavalry, could not be used to outflank Caesar and take his army in the rear. Caesar again used a fourth line to great effect as he had at Pharsalus, and his archers and slingers were able to overcome the elephant corps Scipio placed in front of his lines. Caesar's army was again victorious. Scipio fled but was drowned at sea; other officers, including Labienus, fled to Spain to fight another day. Most of Scipio's men were massacred after the battle because Caesar's soldiers believed that his *clementia* was prolonging the war; they ensured that they would not have to face these soldiers again.

A Soldier's View of Ancient War: The Last Campaign in Spain, 46–45

In 46–45, Caesar moved to Spain to face the last senatorial army. This campaign is noteworthy because the *Spanish War* was written not by a well-educated officer but apparently by a common soldier who was an eyewitness to these events. This may be the only account of Roman Republican warfare

from a *miles'* perspective. The author of the *Spanish War* includes not only a soldier's view of war but also information about certain actions the noble Caesar might have omitted. The horrors, brutality, and atrocities of war are clearly evident.

His story is one of constant work, maneuvers, sieges, skirmishes, and combat. There were "vigorous battles," followed by "hand-to-hand fighting" in which the two armies competed to match each other "mound for mound" in corpses. Units that lost contact with Caesar's main army were often attacked. A unit of Caesar's cavalry became lost in the fog and was "cut to pieces." Efforts to get supplies were complicated by constant enemy harassment. Soldiers from Caesar's army were attacked while attempting to secure a source of water; others were attacked while trying to gather wood for heating and cooking fires. These difficulties added to the men's deprivations. Night attacks on Caesar's camp were common. His enemies used firebrands as missiles in an effort to set the camp on fire. This, of course, meant that a good night's sleep was hard to come by. On numerous occasions, Caesar's soldiers were forced to attack fortified positions, either an enemy city or an entrenched camp. These actions led to numerous dead and wounded. During the siege of Munda, in Spain, Caesar did not construct walls around the city in the usual manner. The wall around the town was made not of turf or dirt but of the dead bodies of enemy soldiers. However, the heads had first been removed from the corpses and set on sword-points on top of the makeshift wall. What made this even worse was that most of their victims were fellow Romans. Other similar examples abound. Two enemy envoys captured by Caesar's men had their hands chopped off. When three enemy scouts were captured, one was beheaded and two were crucified. According to the author, Caesar's men often took matters into their own hands. Concerned that Caesar might spare captured enemies, his soldiers executed captives, even Romans, without authorization. The local population was often the target of this type of treatment, as it was difficult for Roman soldiers to distinguish between friendly and hostile natives. Caesar's campaign culminated with the Battle of Munda. The battle began with "volleys of missiles" and "showers of stones" that piled the dead in "heaps." The two most terrifying aspects of ancient warfare followed: the noise and the hand-to-hand combat. The noise of war included battle cries and the clash of shields, "mingled with the groans" of the wounded and the dying. This was followed by the charge of Caesar's veterans, which "struck terror" into the enemy and "numbed" them with fear. According to Caesar's soldier, the battle resulted in 34,000 mostly enemy (Roman) dead. The sights, sounds, and even smells to which the soldiers were exposed were in some cases overwhelming.

Caesar's victory at Munda ended the Second Civil War; in 45 he returned to Rome and was made dictator for 10 years. In February 44, he was named dictator for life. Roman senators, led by M. Junius Brutus and C. Cassius Longinus, believing that for the Republic to live Caesar must die, assassinated him on the Ides of March (March 15, 44).

THE FALL OF THE REPUBLIC, 44–31

Rome would be convulsed by almost constant violence and civil war from the *Ides* until the Battle of Actium 13 years later; these struggles would dictate the course of Roman history for the next five centuries.

A Dispatch from the Front: The Battle of Forum Gallorum, 43

In April 43, two battles would be fought in northern Italy: the Battle of Forum Gallorum, on April 14, and the Battle of Mutina, on April 21. On one side was the army of M. Antonius (*consul* 44). Antonius was a longtime ally of Caesar, having fought with him in the Gallic and Civil Wars. After Caesar's assassination, Antonius had become very powerful through the support of many of Caesar's veterans but now found himself a target. Facing Antonius were four armies led by four unlikely allies: D. Junius Brutus (*proconsul* 44), one of the assassins of Caesar; the *consuls* of 43, A. Hirtius and C. Vibius Pansa, both supporters of Caesar; and C. Octavius. Octavius, Caesar's great-nephew and, more important, Caesar's closest male Roman relative. Caesar must have seen something in this young man that convinced him that he was destined for greatness. Caesar's will named Octavius his heir and adopted him as his son.¹⁶ Octavius used his name and wealth to gain power through the support of many of Caesar's veterans. Though he was only 19 years old in 43, he vowed that not only would he avenge his adoptive father but that he would also someday rule the Roman world. Ironically, many of his older, more experienced rivals did not take him seriously until it was too late.

What makes Forum Gallorum so unique for the study of ancient warfare is the survival of an amazing piece of evidence: a war dispatch written by Ser. Sulpicius Galba (*praetor* 54) a *legate* in Pansa's army to the famous orator, author, and senator M. Tullius Cicero (*consul* 63). The letter was written April 15, the day after the battle, while Galba was in camp with the army at Mutina. This eyewitness report from the front line, written so soon after the battle, is the only one of its kind to survive from antiquity.

Antonius's army was besieging D. Brutus and his army in Mutina when the armies of Hirtius and Octavian arrived. Though there were cavalry skirmishes, they decided not to fight a battle until Pansa came with his four legions. Pansa and his army advanced north over the Apennines into Cisalpine Gaul, then turned northwest at Bonina along the *Via Aemilia* toward Mutina. Antonius had evacuated his troops from Bonina to concentrate on Mutina, allowing Pansa to pass. However, Antonius was informed of Pansa's approach and wished to destroy Pansa's army before it joined with those of Hirtius and Octavian. He took some of his soldiers from Mutina southeast to surprise and intercept Pansa. Antonius had two legions (II, XXXV), two elite Praetorian *cohorts* (one was his own, and one was that of his officer M. Junius Silanus), cavalry, and light infantry. Hirtius, though, knew Pansa's men were mostly raw recruits and, under cover of darkness, had already sent his veteran Martian legion, his own Praetorian *cohort*, and the Praetorian *cohort*

of Octavian to support Pansa. Galba reports that as Pansa's army marched northwest along the *Via Aemilia* the following day, just east of Forum Gallorum and eight miles southeast of Mutina, they could see Antonius's cavalry and light infantry moving toward them along the same road. However, Antonius wished to conceal his true strength and had hidden his two legions and two Praetorian *cohorts* in Forum Gallorum and in the brush and woods on either side of the road. Pansa's Praetorian units and the Martian legion immediately moved forward to intercept, while the new recruits apparently hung back. According to Galba, the legion was broken down into *cohorts* for deployment: eight *cohorts* from the Martian legion north of the road led by Galba and D. Carfulenus, three *cohorts* (the remaining two from the Martian legion and Hirtius' Praetorian unit) south of the road led by Pansa, and on the road itself Octavian's Praetorian *cohort*. These units were shocked to see not only the cavalry and light infantry approaching but, suddenly emerging into line, Antonius's two legions, legion II to the south of the road and legion XXXV to the north, with the two Praetorian units on the road itself. Galba tells Cicero that despite being outnumbered (ten *cohorts* to eight), his units drove back legion XXXV, moving more than a half-mile beyond Pansa's line. Galba then discovered, to his horror, that he and his soldiers were now separated from their comrades and that Antonius's forces and Antonius himself had moved passed him on his left. At the same time, Antonius had ordered his Moorish Cavalry on his left to outflank Galba's *cohorts* on the right. Galba quickly ordered the retreat, using his light infantry to move out to the right as a screen to prevent the Moors from attacking his *cohorts* from the sides or from behind. Galba and his men were able to successfully withdraw southeast to the camp. At the same time, Octavian's outnumbered Praetorian *cohort* was annihilated on the road. Pansa and his men on the left, facing even greater odds, were giving ground and were in danger of being outflanked by Antonius's cavalry, but it was not until Pansa was wounded by a javelin and carried out of the battle to Bonina that his men broke and fled back to the Roman camp. Victorious in all three sectors of the battle, Antonius pursued the fleeing enemy right up to the camp but was unable to storm the ramparts or force Pansa's men to surrender. Antonius then decided to return to Mutina, but on his way back he was intercepted at the very same spot where the earlier battle had been fought by twenty *cohorts* sent by Hirtius, who had learned of the initial engagement. Antonius's men, tired from the earlier battle, were defeated. Only Antonius and some of his cavalry were able to escape back to Mutina thanks to the cover of darkness. Two of Antonius's veteran legions had been wiped out, and their two Eagles captured.

The second battle occurred at Mutina one week later. The remainder of Antonius's army was destroyed by the combined forces of Hirtius, Octavian, and the remaining soldiers from Pansa's army. However, it was not a decisive victory; Antonius and part of his cavalry escaped northwest over the Alps. Hirtius was killed in the battle, and at almost the exact same time Pansa died from his wounds in Bonina. Octavian was the great beneficiary of the battle; he inherited the legions of Hirtius and Pansa and those of D. Brutus

who had deserted their commander. These battles ensured that Octavian, at the age of 19, was well on his way toward achieving his great dream of ruling the Roman world.

The Last Great Naval Campaign of the Ancient World: Actium, 32–31

By 36, after seven more years of violence and warfare, the champions of the Republic, including Brutus and Cassius, were dead, and the empire was divided between two *triumvirs* with absolute power. Octavian controlled the western half of the Roman Empire, including Rome and Italy, while Antonius, who had made a miraculous comeback after Mutina and then joined with Octavian, controlled the east. Octavian was not content ruling merely half an empire, so he began a propaganda campaign against Antonius's new wife Cleopatra, claiming she wanted to rule the Roman world and was trying to do so through her marriage to Antonius. The propaganda worked, and Octavian declared war, not on Antonius but on Cleopatra. He claimed that this was not a civil war, Romans against Romans, fought by Octavian merely for power; this was to be a great national crusade, Italy against Egypt, west against east, the gods of Rome against the strange gods of Egypt. Octavian summed up the struggle in a speech recorded by the historian Dio (163–235 C.E.):

We Romans are the rulers of the greatest and best parts of the world, and yet we find ourselves ridiculed and trampled upon by a women of Egypt. This disgraces our fathers who defeated Pyrrhus, Philip V, Perseus, Antiochus, Numantia, Carthage, and the Cimbri. It disgraces our own generation which has conquered Gaul, Pannonia and has crossed the sea to Britain. The men who achieved these feats would be cut to the heart if they ever knew that we have been overcome by this pestilence of a woman. Would we not utterly dishonor ourselves if after surpassing all other nations in valor, we meekly endured the insults of the rabble of Alexandria and Egypt who worship reptiles and beasts as gods, they embalm their bodies to make them appear immortal, they are most forward in effrontery, but most backwards in courage. Worst of all they are ruled not by a man, but are the slaves of a woman, but yet they have dared to claim our possessions as if we would ever surrender what belongs to us.¹⁷

Another civil war had begun in what would be the final major naval campaign and battle of antiquity.

Undoubtedly, Antonius went into this conflict full of confidence. Octavian was not a great military leader and had demonstrated a tendency to become ill just before major engagements. Antonius was an experienced commander; he had served with Caesar in the Gallic and Civil Wars, and he had brought the Second Triumvirate to power with his victory at the Battle of Philippi in 42, which of course Octavian had missed through illness. Antonius commanded 16 legions and 500 warships. Yet, he was precluded from launching an invasion of Italy because of his alliance with Egypt's queen. He would instead have to cede the initiative to Octavian and wait across the Adriatic in Greece as Pompeius had done in 48 and the

Republicans had done in 42. Antonius sent his army into Greece under the command of P. Canidius Crassus (cos. 40). He then established a string of nine naval bases to prevent Octavian from crossing into Greece, or failing that, to quickly attack Octavian wherever he landed before his army was at full strength. The bases stretching from north to south were:

1. Corcyra (island off Greece's western coast)
2. Actium (city on Greece's western coast, guarding the Gulf of Ambracia)
3. Leucas (island just off the coast southwest of Actium)
4. Patrae (city in central Greece, guarding the Gulf of Corinth)
5. Zacynthus (island off the coast of the Peloponnesus)
6. Methone (city on the southwestern tip of the Peloponnesus)
7. Cape Taenarum (on the southern tip of the Peloponnesus)
8. Crete (island southeast of Greece)
9. Cyrene (on the coast of North Africa directly south of Greece)

Antonius's fleet was distributed in these bases to await the arrival of Octavian's forces. Antonius and Cleopatra meanwhile moved first to Athens and then to Patrae, where they spent the winter of 32–31.

Though Octavian was indeed not a good military leader, Antonius had forgotten to take M. Vipsanius Agrippa (63–12) into account. Agrippa was the military mind behind Octavian's great victories, including the final defeat of Sex. Pompeius and his fleet in 36. He had developed into a great admiral, and his sailors were battle hardened and experienced. Antonius, despite all his military success, had no experience of naval command.

Agrippa decided on a bold move at the end of March 31; rather than use the shortest possible route across the Adriatic, he sailed with his fleet south-east directly for Antonius's base at Methone. Agrippa achieved surprise and quickly captured the base. Now Methone could be used by Octavian's forces to attack Antonius's ships, and to disrupt Antonius's sea-borne supply lines, which stretched back to Egypt. This successful action also convinced many of the eastern kings and Greek cities that had originally sided with Antonius to defect now that the strategic situation had changed. Antonius was forced to move ships from his other bases to deal with the new threat at Methone. This allowed Octavian to cross over in April and seize Corcyra, which had been stripped of its forces, and then to move on to Actium on the mainland. He made his camp just north of the city, across a narrow channel of water through which the Gulf of Ambracia flowed into the Ionian Sea. Antonius and Cleopatra arrived from Patrae a few days later and set up their camp just across from Octavian on the southern side of the narrow channel. Their camp was on a small peninsula that jutted out into that narrow channel, facing east into the gulf itself. Antonius sent for Canidius, who soon arrived with the land forces, and he brought most of his warships inside the gulf and beached them next to his camp, where they could be protected by the fortifications and by his army.

At first, Antonius's position seemed strong, but quite quickly everything changed. Agrippa won two naval victories, one at Leucas, where he caught the Antonian forces by surprise, and one at Patrae, where he

defeated Antonius's commander Q. Nasidius. As a result of these battles, two of Antonius's fleets were lost and Agrippa seized the Antonian bases on Leucas and at Patrae. Octavian, no longer afraid of an attack by Antonius's naval forces in his rear, could now blockade the entrance to the gulf. The gulf had no exit except through the narrow channel to the west. Antonius had lost so many ships at Methone, Leucas, and Patrae that a breakout attempt by sea would be very risky. The Pindus Mountain range also would make an overland retreat in the face of a hostile enemy very difficult. Antonius now had great difficulties receiving supplies, while Octavian could receive supplies indefinitely by sea. Octavian also had placed his camp next to a stream, which provided his men with water. Antonius's men suffered from various diseases caused in part by the marshes near his camp. Not surprisingly, morale began to suffer, the soldiers began to desert, and, more important, his most trusted senatorial supporters also began to desert to Octavian, either because of their dislike of Cleopatra and the influence she wielded or because of the obviously un-Republican ways in which Antonius now carried himself or because they now believed Antonius was doomed. Antonius's naval bases at Crete and Cyrene were handed over to Octavian by M. Licinius Crassus (cos. 30), the grandson of Caesar's triumviral ally. Like most of those who defected to Octavian, Crassus was handsomely rewarded; he would be made *consul* in 30 and governor of Macedonia in 29–28. Altogether, seven of Antonius's nine naval bases were now in the hands of Octavian.

Suddenly, Antonius, Cleopatra, and their forces were trapped. Desperately, Antonius tried numerous maneuvers to break the blockade. He crossed the narrow channel and set up camp next to that of Octavian and offered battle. Not surprisingly, knowing that time was on his side, Octavian declined. Antonius next made a sudden march with his army north toward Macedonia. This, however, was merely a feint designed to divert the enemy's attention from the gulf so that the fleet could break out. C. Sosius (cos. 32) had been left in charge of the navy and launched an attack, in a heavy mist, against one of Octavian's blockading forces. Sosius was able to defeat this first squadron, but then Agrippa showed up in the nick of time to drive Sosis and his ships back into the gulf. As the summer wore on and conditions worsened, Antonius had two options. One, suggested by Canidius, was to burn the ships and march north with the army, which now numbered 19 legions and 12,000 cavalry, to fight a decisive battle on land in Thessaly, Macedonia, or Thrace. However, a second option was supported by Cleopatra. She did not want to burn the fleet since 60 of the ships were Egyptian, nor did she wish to be separated from Antonius, which might happen in a land campaign. Antonius sided with Cleopatra. The fleet would try to break out, and then Canidius would take the land forces northeast through Greece to Asia to fight another day.

The decisive battle at Actium took place September 2, 31. Because of his losses and because of the diseases that had sidelined so many rowers, Antonius could only man 230 warships, 60 of which were Cleopatra's. Those ships for which he could not find rowers were simply burned. Octavian had 400

ships, which were generally faster and more maneuverable than Antonius's. Antonius led his ships out of the channel, hoping to come to grips quickly near the coast in a relatively confined space where his heavier and stronger ships would have the advantage and where the coasts would prevent an enemy encirclement. However, Octavian's fleet slowly backed water so that the battle would be fought in the open sea, where his navy would have more room to spread out and to maneuver and in which Antonius's ships would have to cover more water, perhaps leading to the development of gaps in his line. Antonius's ships moved out of the channel and fanned out into a crescent shape, with Cleopatra's 60 ships in reserve. Octavian's ships formed a similar pattern, with Octavian on the right and Agrippa commanding the left, but still they kept their distance and waited. Antonius did not want to move out any further and give the advantage to his enemy, but his other alternative, to retreat back into the gulf, was worse. He knew if he did that, with supplies low and morale lower, his army would soon disintegrate. He had to fight now. The two fleets joined battle, and as Octavian and Agrippa moved to outflank Antonius's forces, Antonius continually moved ships from his center to protect his wings. Though he was outnumbered, his men were holding. Then suddenly, Cleopatra and her 60 ships moved west, breaking through the weakened centers of Octavian and Antonius. Once in the open sea, they hoisted sail and fled. Antonius quickly followed with maybe 80 of his ships. The rest of his fleet was destroyed or captured. With a strong wind coming out of the northwest, Antonius and Cleopatra were able to make their escape, moving first to the base at Cape Taenarum, which was still loyal, and then sailing south for Egypt. Great debate has surrounded their actions. Some hostile sources blamed the defeat on Cleopatra, who bailed out at the first sign of danger. Others blame Antonius, who was so in love with Cleopatra that he thought nothing of his sailors and soldiers and chased after her. According to Plutarch:

He allowed himself to be dragged along after the woman . . . no sooner did he see her ships sailing away than every other consideration was blotted from his mind, and he abandoned and betrayed the men who were fighting and dying for his cause . . . he hurried after the woman who had already ruined him and would soon complete his destruction.¹⁸

It is also possible that Cleopatra's flight and Antonius's following were part of a plan to extricate as many ships as possible to save themselves. This hope largely rested on the fact that the army would still be intact and would eventually make its way back to Egypt. Unfortunately, though Canidius and his army had moved out as ordered, the men were no longer willing to serve after their leader had fled. Canidius, recognizing the army's mood, fled to Egypt, and his men went over to Octavian. For Antonius, the Battle of Actium resulted not only in the loss of his fleet but also in the loss of his army. The war was now effectively over. According to Plutarch, Antonius sensed that all was lost on the way back to Egypt: "He went forward by himself into the bows of the ship and sat down without a word, holding his head between his hands."¹⁹

Both Antonius and Cleopatra would later commit suicide in Egypt. The country was absorbed by the Roman Empire; 292 years after the first Ptolemy had taken over following Alexander's death, his dynasty came to an end. Actium, and the year 31, also marked the official end of the Roman Republic (509–31 B.C.E.) and the beginning of the Empire (31 B.C.E.–476 C.E.). The Empire was a monarchy, ruled by one man. Octavian, at the age of 31, became Rome's first emperor.²⁰

Ten

The Roman Empire, 31 B.C.E.–180 C.E.

THE REFORMS OF AUGUSTUS, 31 B.C.E.–14 C.E.

The victory of Octavian, known as Augustus after 27, and his assumption of power had a dramatic impact on the Roman military. Keeping the army under control was his main priority, and by following his progress we see the great difficulties all ancient states faced when trying to keep their armed forces in line. His career and his successful rise to power were, of course, inexorably linked with his success with the army. He had then to take steps to prevent rebellions by individual army commanders, mutinies by common soldiers, or both. To that end, he had to control not only the average soldier but also the officers and senatorial and equestrian commanders. He had to control an army that to some extent had been out of control during the late Republic. Only that way could he maintain his own power and maintain peace and order in the empire.

Augustus had no blueprint, but instead a new government evolved over time (31–23) that came to be known as the *Principate*. Under this system, he possessed certain specific and defined powers that allowed him to run the Roman Empire while creating the façade that the Republic still functioned freely. He created this system for two reasons: to keep power in his own hands and to avoid arousing such bitter feelings that he would suffer the same fate as Caesar.

The Roman Legions in the Early Empire

Control of the army was the foundation upon which his political power rested. Augustus's military powers evolved over time: from 31–27 he had the *consul's* defined powers, as well as undefined *auctoritas*, which allowed him to continue to control the Roman military. From 27–23, he remained *consul* but also became *proconsul* in Spain, Gaul, and Syria, giving him command of 20 of the 28 Roman legions. This was in fact the only time during his reign that he did not legally control all Rome's armies. After 23, he would no longer

hold the consulship (except in 5 and 2 B.C.E.) or proconsulship but instead was now given the *imperium maius* (greater military power), which made him commander-in-chief over all provincial governors, even in senatorial provinces, and all Rome's armies.

Augustus also made a revolutionary change by creating the first professional, permanent army in Rome's history. It consisted of 28 legions (25 after the disaster in Germany in 9 C.E.), with soldiers who would now make a career out of the army stationed (mostly) along the frontiers of the empire. The names (where known), numbers, and provinces of the legions were:

Rhineland

I
II Augusta
V Alaudae
XIII Gemina
XIV Gemina
XVI
XVII
XVIII
XIX
XX Valeria
XXI

Danube

IV Scythica
V Macedonica
VII
VIII Augusta
XI
XV Apollinaris

Syria

III Gallica
VI Ferrata
X Fretensis
XII Fulminata

Egypt

III Cyrenaica
XXII Deiotariana

Africa

III Augusta
IX Hispana

Spain

IV Macedonica
VI Victrix
X Gemina

Soldiers

Augustus already had extensive experience, dating back to 44, dealing with the men. He knew how to entice them and how to keep them happy, and he knew what displeased them. He had experienced enough mutinies to understand their causes. With this knowledge, he was able to implement wide-ranging reforms to the army. By 13 B.C.E., Augustus had created Rome's first professional army. No longer would temporary armies be created to deal with temporary threats. The 28 legions each had 5,500 men plus cavalry reinforced by a similar number of auxiliary units. Altogether, there would be a permanent standing force of about 300,000 men. These men would serve for defined periods of time. Originally, the term called for 16 years of active service followed by four years in reserve. Those periods were extended in 6 C.E. to 20 and 5. The key to this system of enticing volunteers and keeping soldiers happy while performing a difficult job was, of course, money. During the Republic, problems with money, including irregular pay, unfair or infrequent distribution of plunder, and dissatisfaction with discharge bonuses of cash and land, often led to mutiny. Promises of economic enrichment had been used by many commanders, including Octavian himself, to incite a rebellion in a rival army or a rebellion against the state. Soldiers looked to rebel generals such as Caesar or Octavian for economic rewards that the Senate or their own commander refused to grant. Now Augustus took money out of the equation. Thanks in large part to the wealth of Egypt, he was able to make significant economic improvements to military service. He provided pay of 900 *sesterces*, the same amount distributed by Caesar, which was itself a doubling of the previous stipend provided by the state. This pay would be distributed regularly and would not be subject to the whim of a general or the senatorial government. This was important because republican soldiers often did not receive pay in a timely fashion. Donatives were granted by Augustus but were usually not large or frequent. Though the pay was not extravagant, the key to the system was the retirement benefits. Augustus provided either a cash bonus or land or both to men who had served their time. It seems that after 13 B.C.E., men received, instead of land, 12,000 *sesterces*, or about 12 years' pay. Estimates vary, but possibly as many as 200,000 men received benefits during the first three decades of Augustus's reign. These included mass discharges in 30–28 and 14 B.C.E. To cover all these expenditures, Augustus established the *aerarium militare* (military treasury) in 6 C.E. To help fund this treasury, Augustus donated his own money and later imposed sales and inheritance taxes. These economic reforms, at least for much of Augustus's reign, helped keep the soldiers happy (or happy enough), removing one important cause of rebellion. The soldiers knew that if they remained loyal, the emperor and the state would provide for them. The soldiers now became defenders of the status quo. At least for the time being, mutinous officers could not use money as an incentive to spark a rebellion.

At the same time the Augustan system was attempting to keep the men happy, it also encouraged divisions among the rank and file to prevent

rebellion. The new, professional nature of the military led to a definite hierarchy among the regular soldiers. The *immunes*, which included the *aquilifers* and the *signifiers*, among others, enjoyed increased status and had better conditions of service. Also, these ranks were often a stepping-stone to the coveted centurionate. Because they were on their way to increased status and prosperity, they were less willing to join rebellions.

Centurions

Keeping the average soldier happy was only the first step. The second step involved the centurions. Thanks to his civil war experiences, Augustus realized the importance of the *centurion* in the chain of command. He had to do everything he could to bind these men closer to the state and to himself and at the same time worked to separate them in certain ways from the average soldier. In the early *Principate*, there were about 1,500 *centurions* in the Roman army. Most of the posts were filled from the ranks. It is possible Augustus was involved with, or at least approved of, decisions on who would win promotion into and within the centurionate. Men became *centurions* on the basis of their military and leadership qualities, and certainly also of their loyalty to the regime. They inspired great respect among the men, unlike higher officers, who were often political appointees. As such, the *centurions* were crucial in a commander's control of the camp and were the backbone of the army, vital for its continued discipline. They could act as an early warning system; since they were close to the men, they would know if any problems developed. Without their support, it would be nearly impossible for a commander to regain control and punish his men. During the Republic, the *centurions* did not always remain loyal to their commanders. Instead, they shared many of the grievances of the men and therefore often took a leadership role in these rebellions or remained neutral and allowed a mutiny to spread without acting to quell it or reporting it to superiors. Augustus's system, in contrast, dramatically increased the status and wealth of the *centurions* through increased pay and retirement bonuses; it also increased their opportunities to rise up within the army and offered greater opportunities after discharge. *Centurions'* pay was raised to between 5 times (for an ordinary *centurion*) and 20 times (for the *primus pilus*) the average soldier's pay. More money meant more separation between the *centurion* and the men, despite their similar origins. They also now had the opportunity to rise into the Praetorian Guard, which enjoyed better conditions of service in the capital and higher pay. They could rise through the ranks to become military *tribunes* or even camp *prefects*. The *primus pilus* was now granted equestrian status at discharge. This represented a huge opportunity for social mobility. No longer would a *centurion* join a mutiny and risk his future; he simply had too much to lose. The *centurions* were now in a privileged position and were therefore willing to defend Augustus's government, which guaranteed their newfound wealth and status. A chasm opened up between the *centurions* and their former comrades. Though he did rise from the ranks, a *centurion* would

no longer feel the same strong kinship with the men. Conversely, the soldiers no longer believed that their *centurions* shared their views or grievances. Instead, many soldiers now disliked their *centurions*, not least because of their role as the camp disciplinarians. They were seen as agents of the officers, part of the establishment, and were the “traditional objects of hatred.”¹ Augustus’s reforms, which included increased pay and discharge bonuses and numerous opportunities for social advancement, had successfully created a gulf between the men and the *centurions*, separating the *centurions* from the ranks from which they sprang while binding them to the *princeps*.

Generals, Officers, and Provinces

Augustus’s reforms were also designed to control his generals and officers. By 14 C.E., there were nine military provinces in which legions were stationed. Augustus appointed the nine provincial governors; seven were senators of consular rank with the official title *legatus Augustus propraetor* (leg. Aug. p.p.), one was the prefect of Egypt, chosen from the equestrian order, and one was *proconsul* of Africa in charge of a senatorial province, the only non-*legate* to still control a legion. Because of Augustus’s greater *imperium*, all were subordinate and ultimately responsible to him, and none governed in his own right on his own independent authority. They were rarely allowed to remain in one place for any length of time. Instead, they were moved from province to province at the discretion of the *princeps*. The obvious purpose of this policy was to discourage the development of loyalty among a governor, his soldiers, and the provincials.² Last, but definitely not least, these men were chosen not only for their competence but also for their reliability and their close relationships, sometimes very close, with Augustus and other members of the royal family.

In the nine military provinces, there were 25 legions:³ Upper Germany (four legions), Lower Germany (four), Dalmatia (two), Moesia (two), Pannonia (three), Syria (four), Spain (three), Egypt (two) and Africa (one). Yet, in no province were all the legions stationed in one garrison. In Germany there were eight legions total, four in Upper and four in Lower. They were further subdivided: in Lower Germany, for example, there were two legions at Ara Ubiorum (I, XX) and two at Vetera (V, XXI), and often smaller units would be detached and sent elsewhere for other military or garrison duties. The whole provincial army was rarely in the same place at the same time. Germany was in fact the only place where even two legions were stationed together. In provinces with multiple legions, such as Pannonia, Syria, and Spain, for example, each legion had a separate residence. In Pannonia, legion VII, *Augusta*, was at Poetovio, legion IX, *Hispana*, was at Siscia, and XV, *Apollinaris*, was at Emona.

Control of these various units in various places was divided among numerous officials. The overall commander in Germany was Germanicus, the great-nephew of Augustus (15 B.C.E.–19 C.E.). Below Germanicus were two

Augustan *legates*: C. Silius Caecina (cos. 13 C.E.) in Upper and A. Caecina Severus (cos. suff. 1 B.C.E.) in Lower. Each had four legions under his direct command but was usually with only a part of his army at any given time. Below the *legates* were numerous other officials: each legion had its own local commander, known as the *legati legiones* (*legates* of the legions). This officer was of senatorial rank, usually an ex-*praetor*, whose duty was to command one individual legion. There was also the *praefectus castrorum* (camp prefect), usually of equestrian rank but sometimes ex-*centurions* who had risen from the ranks. This officer ran each camp in which one or two legions were stationed. Both of these positions had become permanent fixtures during the reign of Augustus. All of these men were, of course, chosen by Augustus not only for their ability but also for their loyalty. Further down the ranks, there were roughly 150 military tribunes throughout the empire, derived overwhelmingly from the equestrian order, though men from the senatorial order and commoners rising from below also held these positions. The relatively small number would have made it possible for the *princeps* to either appoint or review those chosen for these positions, as well.

The distribution and dispersion of legions and the proliferation of commanders and officers served Augustus's purposes. There were so many commanders and so many subordinate officers that each could provide a check on the others; mutiny would be very difficult because numerous officers in numerous different camps would have to join an uprising to mount a credible threat, and with so many people involved in different locales, the chances of detection would be much greater. A mutinous general could not simply walk across a camp to another tent to discuss an uprising. Letters would usually have to be sent to coordinate such an uprising, meaning that a paper trail of evidence could exist. Only one of these numerous subordinates need turn informer for the plan to be discovered. Even if a provincial commander was able to gain the support of his various officers, he would then have to win the loyalty of the *centurions* and eventually let the soldiers, thousands of them, in on the secret. Once this happened, the chances of detection would increase as the secret became more widely known. Even if a mutinous general got this far and secrecy was maintained, the army he would then possess to challenge the *princeps* would not be large: the biggest force controlled by a *legate* consisted of four legions, and most were smaller. One *legatus propraetore* could not launch a successful rebellion on his own without the help of key subordinates in different garrisons because he simply did not have direct control over enough legions to seriously challenge the *princeps*. He would need the active support of some of his military peers and at the very least the neutrality of most of the others. Attempts to secure either would also increase the chances of detection. In effect, a system of checks and balances had been instituted.

Commanding officers were no longer in a position to acquire the wealth and military glory independent of Augustus that could be used to challenge his authority or sap the loyalty of the men to him. Commanders of Rome's armies were no longer independent but directly subordinate to Augustus, as

were those further down the chain of command. The legions took their oaths not to their local commanders but directly to Augustus. Commanders retained power for only short periods and were constantly moved around. They would be unable to build up loyalty among their troops after such a short stay. The men sent to command armies were, of course, sent because of their loyalty to Augustus. Military glory would now be monopolized by the *princeps* and his family. Activities of provincial governors would be strictly controlled; they would not be allowed independently to launch campaigns that would bring them plunder and acclaim. After L. Cornelius Balbus, in 19 B.C.E., only members of the imperial family would be permitted to celebrate *triumphs*. The *triumphalia*, which included the *triumph's* ornaments and dress, would still be awarded, but the parade through Rome and the glory that went with it were no longer allowed. In 22 C.E., the last Roman general outside the royal family enjoyed his troops' acclamation as *imperator*. The awarding of an *agnomen* (a nickname) for military success almost completely died out in the imperial period.⁴

In 49 B.C.E., Caesar possessed 10 legions in Gaul. This army was led by officers who, for the most part, were chosen by Caesar because of their loyalty to him; only T. Labienus would go over to Pompeius when the civil war commenced. More importantly, in 49 there were only 21 Roman legions, including Caesar's, spread around the empire, and of these only two were in Italy. Caesar's army represented nearly half the military strength of the empire. Is it any wonder that he decided on civil war at the beginning of 49, given the relative strength he possessed compared to that of his senatorial enemies and the government? Augustus, of course, was keenly aware of Caesar's career and wanted to prevent something similar from happening to him. This is why he created a large permanent army and why he saw to the separation and distribution of the legions and their officers, as noted. He did not want to allow one man to hold the same type of power Caesar had possessed, which could possibly tempt a commander into risking a rebellion against the *princeps*. There would be no new Caesars rampaging through Gaul for eight years, dramatically increasing their wealth and prestige along the way, to threaten the government. Augustus would ensure that no commander had such a large army for such a long period. He would ensure that a general's subordinates would be chosen not by the general but by himself, on the basis of their loyalty not to the general but to Augustus. Generals and officers were no longer willing to precipitate or join a rebellion that had seemingly little chance of success. Augustus controlled all the legions, which, of course, meant even if a few turned against him, he would still have plenty of forces on hand.

Praetorian Guard

The Praetorian Guard represented another important element in Augustus's efforts to control the army. Since 44, he had made use of elite units, not only the Praetorian Guard but also foreign cavalry, such as his German

bodyguards. He knew how important these units were to maintaining control of his camp and protecting him against attack. It should be no surprise that he would keep these units once in control of the empire. The Praetorian Guard was raised to 9,000 men and stationed around central Italy. Guardsmen would be paid double the salary of the average soldier (1,800 *sesterces* rather than 900), would have shorter tours of duty (16 years active service followed by four years in reserve, rather than 20 and 5), and would be given nearly twice the retirement bonus (20,000 to 12,000 *sesterces*) and/or more land. The purpose of the imperial guards was the same as that of the republican guards: to protect the emperor and to help him control the other soldiers. Stationed in Italy, they would be entirely separate from the rest of the legions. This meant they would be unaffected by any mutinous movements in the frontier legions and then could be used by Augustus against rebellious troops. Despite their small numbers, these separate, loyal, elite units could be used to overawe regular legionnaires and to support a besieged general. The guards also allowed Augustus to control Rome and potential rivals in the capital. In short, they provided him with the necessary power to run the empire.⁵

THE SYSTEM SUCCEEDS: *PAX ROMANA*, 31 B.C.E.–180 C.E.

The Augustan system was a success because, despite the problems the soldiers experienced and despite their numerous grievances, they did not rebel. Their discontent was manifested only in silent protest (refusing to sign up for further service) or not-so-silent protest (agitating to attack an enemy). Despite the presence of discontent soldiers, the generals and officers were unable or unwilling to challenge the authority of Augustus. There were *no* mutinies or rebellions during Augustus's 45-year-reign. The system continued to work even after Augustus's death, in 14 C.E. With one major exception (the civil wars of the "Year of the Four Emperors," 68–69 C.E.), Rome enjoyed peace and security from Actium to the death of the emperor M. Aurelius (31 B.C.E.–180 C.E.). With some exceptions (Caligula, Nero, and Domitian, to name a few), Rome was blessed with effective emperors who modeled their rule on that of Augustus. This period was known by alternate labels such as the Golden Age and the *Pax Romana* (the Roman Peace), and it was the reorganization of the Roman government and especially the Roman military that made it all possible.

The zenith came in the Roman year 870 A.U.C. (*Ab Urba Condita*, or "From the Founding of the City"; on our calendar, 117 C.E.), when the Roman Emperor M. Ulpius Trajanus (Trajan, r. 98–117 C.E.) stood at the shores of the Persian Gulf after defeating the Parthians in battle. Trajan was the first Roman emperor to make it so far east, and, by his efforts, with the conquest of the new Parthian provinces, the Roman Empire had now reached its greatest territorial extent, stretching from Scotland to the Persian Gulf and from the borders of Russia to Morocco. He dreamed of continuing on to India to emulate Alexander the Great but instead decided that he was too old and turned back

toward Rome, only to die on the way. He was replaced by his adopted son, P. Aelius Hadrianus (Hadrian, r. 117–138 C.E.). When Hadrian took over, he made a monumental decision. He decided that the Roman Empire was too big and therefore too difficult to defend, so he gave up the provinces Trajan had conquered in the east. Emperors who followed Hadrian would generally adhere to this policy; after 117, the expansion of the Roman Empire had effectively ended.

Eleven

The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, 180 C.E.—476 C.E.

THE END OF THE *PRINCIPATE*, 180 C.E.—235 C.E.

Augustus's system, which brought the Roman army under control of the state, would eventually fail, with terrible repercussions for the empire. In 193 C.E.,¹ after the assassination of M. Aurelius's son Commodus (180–192 C.E.), in a preview of the next century's civil wars, three Roman armies converged on Italy to see whose general would be the new emperor. One of the generals, L. Septimius Severus, invaded Italy, killed the previous emperor Didius Julius and the leaders of the Praetorian Guard, defeated his other rivals in battle, and made himself emperor. The reign of Septimius Severus (r. 193–211) ended the *Principate* after 224 years. No longer would emperors rule with the Senate; instead they would now be absolute monarchs ruling openly as military dictators. As Severus told his sons, “Make the soldiers rich and don’t worry about anything else.”

To keep his soldiers happy, Severus killed hundreds of senators and other wealthy citizens and divided their estates among his men. Military authority had triumphed over civilian authority.

ANARCHY, 235–270

The demise of the Severan Dynasty in 235 inaugurated a long period of anarchy characterized by constant civil war and an army awakened to its own power. No longer was there an emperor like Augustus with the necessary authority to keep officers and soldiers in line. Instead, nearly every year, an army commander would decide that he wished to be emperor, so he would go before his men and make promises to them that he would fulfill if they helped him win the throne. He would then march against the emperor, precipitating a civil war. In some cases, the challenger would be defeated and killed; in others, he would emerge victorious and take the now-vacant throne. However, once he became emperor, he had to make his men happy. If he could not find the necessary funds or if he tried to impose discipline,

they would assassinate him and replace him with another officer. Even if he was able to fulfill his promises to his men, inevitably another army commander would decide that he wanted to be emperor, and the whole process would begin again. Between 235 and 270 C.E., there were 37 different emperors, only one of whom died of natural causes.

At the same time, as the empire was disintegrating internally, it faced massive external pressures. First, in the east, a new Persian Empire emerged. Even though the Persians had been governed by outsiders for 500 years, first Greeks and then Parthians, the ancient glories of Persia had not been forgotten. In 224, a Persian noble named Ardeshir, who claimed descent from Cyrus the Great, overthrew the Parthian Empire (250 B.C.E.–224 C.E.). In its place rose a new Persian empire called the Sassanid Empire, named after Ardeshir's grandfather, Sassan. Ardeshir then sought to recover the old Persian Empire by expanding west into provinces now controlled by Rome. War would continue between these two powers off and on for the next four centuries.

The Romans also had to face invasions from the north by German tribes, including the Franks, Suevi, Alemanni, Saxons, Goths, Vandals, Gepidae, Heruli, Burgundians, Lombards, and Marcomanni.

Under these combined pressures, Rome experienced some difficult years. In 251, Decius became the first Roman emperor killed in battle while fighting against the Goths. In 253, the Roman Empire was divided into two parts for the first time, east and west, with two separate emperors to defend against internal and external threats. In 260, Valerian became the first Roman emperor to be captured in battle, by the Persian king Shapor I. He was not treated well; used as a footstool for the king and as a stepladder for Shapor to mount his horse, he later died as a slave in the mines. In 247, the Romans had celebrated the 1,000-year anniversary of the founding of Rome (753 B.C.E.–247 C.E.), but, with all the problems it was now facing, it seemed doubtful that Rome would last much longer.

ROME RECOVERS: THE ILLYRIAN EMPERORS

The Roman army, the cause of so many problems, ultimately saved the Roman Empire. Previously, all the officers and commanders of the Roman army were part of the upper classes. In most cases, these men were amateurs who gained their position based on their family background or their connections. But, beginning in the mid-third century, for the first time soldiers could now rise from the lowest ranks of the army into the officer corps. Also during this time, we see the dramatic rise in importance of Illyrian soldiers in the Roman army.² These Illyrians were considered to be the toughest and bravest soldiers in the army. Though they were not ethnically Roman, they were Roman citizens, and they were huge admirers of Roman civilization and eventually formed a new military caste. They helped one another work their way up through the ranks. They became generals and, eventually, emperors. Beginning with Claudius II, in 268, down through the reign of Constantine I, in 337, Rome was ruled by Illyrians who were not

born to the purple but instead had risen from the ranks and possessed extensive military experience. It was these Illyrian emperors who would save the Roman state.

The first significant Illyrian emperor was Aurelian (r. 270–275). He was a huge man, a great soldier, and general who had risen through the ranks and was nicknamed by his men *Manu ad Ferrum* (“Hand on Hilt”). This was fortunate, because by 270 Roman fortunes had declined dramatically. The Alemanni had invaded Italy, Egypt was in revolt, Gaul, Britain, and Spain were all held by separatists, and Queen Zenobia (r. 267–272) had created the kingdom of Palmyra, which controlled many of Rome’s wealthy eastern provinces. On top of all these foreign problems, Aurelian faced the usual Roman challengers. Five men between 270 and 273 tried to seize the throne. When Aurelian ascended the throne, the Roman Empire comprised only Italy, the Balkans, Greece, and Anatolia. But Aurelian moved quickly; he crushed the Alemanni, he recovered Egypt, he recovered the western provinces, and, in two battles in 271 and 272, he defeated Zenobia. She attempted to escape on a camel through the desert to Persia, but Aurelian was able to capture her and bring her back to Rome to grace his *triumph* (she would remain in Italy for the rest of her life). He was also able to eliminate the Roman challengers to his throne. By 275, he had reunified the Roman Empire against all odds; the Senate even granted him the title *Restitutor Orbis* (“Restorer of the World”). However, this was still a frightened empire; the Golden Age of the Roman Peace less than a century before was long gone. The most obvious illustration of this insecurity was the massive walls being erected around cities, something that had not been necessary in the past. Aurelian himself built a new wall around Rome 12 miles long. This was the first new wall built around Rome since the republic; for so long it had not been needed. It was obvious that, despite Aurelian’s success, this was a new Roman world.

Aurelian ruled for five years, which, by the standards of the century, was a very long time, but in the end he suffered the fate of most of his predecessors. Aurelian’s efforts against corruption had made him many enemies, and these enemies were able to convince the men of the Praetorian Guard that Aurelian meant to disband the unit. He was assassinated by members of the guard in 275.

Aurelian was succeeded by Probus (r. 275–282), another Illyrian, who continued the progress he had begun. Unfortunately, his reign ended in typical fashion: one of his officers, the Praetorian *prefect* M. Aurelius Carus, rose up in rebellion and proclaimed himself emperor. Probus sent soldiers to crush Carus, but the troops revolted and Probus was assassinated. Carus became the new emperor in 282, inheriting an empire on the rebound. In 283, Carus felt strong enough to launch an attack on Persia to avenge the capture of Valerian back in 260. The Roman army was now in far better shape, and the Persian king, Shapor I, had died in 272, precipitating a civil war. Carus led his army into Mesopotamia and won a huge victory over the Persians, capturing both Seleucia and Ctesiphon. It seemed as if Carus was on the verge of destroying Persia once and for all. But then, in his moment of triumph,

Carus suddenly died; the causes are unknown. Carus left two sons; the elder, Carinus, was governing the west, and the younger son, Numerian, was to rule in the east. Numerian, though, was too young to rule on his own, so his father-in-law, L. Asper, acted as regent. Asper decided to call off the invasion of Persia and began the march back to Rome. On the way, Numerian suddenly disappeared from public view and Asper would allow no one to see him, while issuing orders on his behalf. Rumors spread through the camp that Numerian was dead. Asper assured the army that Numerian was fine, but when a group of soldiers burst into Numerian's tent, they found Numerian dead.

The Military Reforms of Diocletian, 284–305

C. Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus (Diocletian) was born in 243 at Salona, in Dalmatia, into an Illyrian peasant family. He joined the army and, thanks to his talent, rose dramatically through the ranks. Unlike most Illyrians, who were rash and who believed caution was a sign of cowardice, Diocletian was shrewd, cold, and calculating. He rose from *miles*, to *centurion*, to military *tribune*, to *prefect*, to provincial governor, until finally he became a member of the *Protectores Domestici* (the general staff and bodyguard of the emperor). In 283, Diocletian was named consul and became a top advisor to Carus. Like most Illyrians, Diocletian was very Roman in his attitude and outlook. He worshipped the Roman gods and believed that the decades of civil war and anarchy had been divine punishment. Like Augustus nearly 300 before, Diocletian believed that *pietas* (duty to family, Rome, and the gods) must be restored to regain the gods' favor. He was convinced that it was his duty to seize power and restore the Roman state. After Numerian's death was revealed, Diocletian moved quickly to seize power. First, with the support of the *Protectores Domestici*, he had Asper arrested. He then called the army together in assembly and, on November 20, 284, the soldiers, probably not spontaneously, proclaimed Diocletian emperor and gave him a purple cloak to wear as a symbol of his new office. Asper was dragged to the tribunal, and Diocletian proclaimed that Asper had killed Numerian. The soldiers demanded vengeance, and, in front of the whole army, Diocletian stabbed Asper to death. Diocletian still had to worry about Carinus in the west, and the winter of 284–285 was spent by both generals maneuvering to gain soldiers and vital provinces. In the spring of 285, the Battle of Marjus was fought. Carinus's army had the upper hand early and drove Diocletian's troops back. But, to Diocletian's shock, Carinus did not press home his advantage; he had been assassinated during the battle by one of his own military *tribunes*, whose wife Carinus had been sleeping with. Once Carinus was dead, his army stopped fighting and went over to Diocletian. In 285, Diocletian was now the unchallenged ruler of the Roman world.

Diocletian dramatically reorganized Rome's government and especially Rome's army. First he transformed Rome's government, establishing what came to be known as the *Tetrarchy*. Diocletian realized that it was too diffi-

cult for one man to run the entire empire, so he ruled in the east and named his old ally Maximian co-emperor to rule in the west (both took the title “Augustus”). Each would have a vice-emperor called a “Caesar.” Second, he dramatically reorganized Rome’s imperial administration, which would bear directly on the Roman military. He divided the empire into four *prefectures*, two in the east (East and Illyria) and two in the west (Italy and Gaul). Each *prefecture* was run by a Praetorian *prefect*. The four *prefectures* would be further subdivided into 72 *dioceses*, each run by its own *vicar*. The *dioceses* would be further subdivided into 120 provinces, each run by both a *comes* and a *proconsul*, who would divide political and military power. This dramatic reorganization was necessary, Diocletian believed, so that no one man would possess too much power or control a large enough army to challenge the *tetrarchs*. Diocletian raised the number of imperial bureaucrats to 30,000 in an effort to centralize power in his hands. Diocletian also changed the nature of Rome’s monarchy, completing a process begun by Severus. No longer would the ruler be a *princeps*, or first citizen, like Augustus; instead, the emperor would now be called *dominus* (lord). He would live in a huge palace, aloof and guarded, he would wear fancy outfits of silk, gold, and jewels and a crown inspired by that of the Persian ruler. Visitors would pass a gauntlet of formalities, attendants, and ceremonies before finally arriving in the throne room, where they would now have to practice *proskynesis* by bowing down and kissing the feet and the robes of the emperor. The emperor was now an absolute monarch whose word was law, similar to the earlier eastern monarchs of Egypt, Persia, and the Hellenistic Kingdoms. This marked the final death of freedom in antiquity that had once existed in the Greek *poleis* and the Roman Republic. This new Roman monarchy would be the basis of Byzantine and Western European royalty for more than a thousand years.

Perhaps Diocletian’s most important reforms dealt with the military. He and his co-emperor, Maximian, were both professional soldiers with an intimate knowledge of the workings of the Roman army at all levels. They transformed the old system of Augustus and Hadrian, which had consisted of fixed lines of defense, a hard shell around the empire’s frontiers. This had worked while the empire’s enemies were generally weak and divided, but during the 200s, the Germans and the new Persian Empire began to invade on a massive scale, and the old line of defense was no longer able to cope. The hard shell of Roman defenses would be repeatedly punctured and, since there was no Roman reserve, invaders could go as far and as fast as their horses could carry them, sometimes as much as 50 miles in a day. Rome’s foot soldiers could not catch up. Beyond the frontiers, most of Rome’s territories were not well defended, and during the Roman peace, few cities even had walls or garrisons, so, once invaders penetrated the frontiers, they caused widespread devastation. Invasions went deep into Roman territory, destroyed Roman property, ravaged Roman land, and killed Roman citizens. Diocletian decided on a new system, which would combine three elements: stronger stationary forts; a massive mobile reserve of cavalry and infantry; and a dramatic increase in the overall number of soldiers.

The forts built during previous centuries were not very effective. They had too many gates, which were often easy to break through, and their walls were usually relatively short, sometimes as low as 20 feet. These forts could not hold out long against a determined attack and were often quickly overwhelmed. Diocletian simply began to build better forts, which, among other things, had much bigger and better walls, moats 25 to 40 feet wide, projecting bastions, watchtowers, and *ballistae* and catapults that had a range of 200 yards. There would be one gate and one gate only. These forts would have granaries, fodder for animals, and all the necessary supplies, including armor and weapons, to allow the men inside to hold out indefinitely. The forts would be very difficult to attack and could be used as a refuge for Roman soldiers and civilians. These strongholds could now delay invaders, who would have to take time to try to attack them. Forts could be used as a base to counterattack, to cut supply lines or lines of communication of the invaders; this worked especially well with civilized attackers like the Persians. These forts would be placed 20 miles apart, making them difficult for an invader to avoid; long detours, usually through difficult terrain, would take time and would also leave the undefeated Roman force in their rear.

These new garrisons would be backed up by other units, stationed 10 to 20 miles behind the lines. These units would consist of mobile elite cavalry and the *limetani* (elite mobile infantry). The forts would hinder or slow an invasion, giving these reserve units time to mobilize and move quickly to the spot of attack. It was hoped that the attacks could be confined to shallow areas, no more than 10 to 20 miles from Rome's frontiers. If they were halted there and driven back, most of the Roman Empire would be unaffected. These new frontier defenses were known as the *strata Diocletiana* and were very effective, both against the Persians and against various tribes.

Last, Diocletian dramatically raised the size of Rome's army. Conscription was strictly enforced, the unemployed from the big cities were pressed into service, and the children of soldiers were obligated to join the military. Diocletian inherited 39 legions, which he now restored to full strength and he also created 14 new legions, for a total of 53. In 180, the Roman army numbered 350,000 men; by 305, the number had risen under Diocletian to nearly 500,000.

The new army Diocletian had created worked extremely well in practice; though war never entirely ceased during his reign, serious incursions deep into Roman territory came to an end. On the northern frontier, Diocletian launched punitive attacks against the neighboring tribes. He established advanced bases across the Rhine and Danube Rivers to watch tribal movements; lookouts were placed at strategic points, boats patrolled the rivers, and soldiers moved on the highways. The eastern frontier was secured, as well. The new Persian king, Narses (r. 293–302), invaded Armenia in 296 and defeated a Roman army at Carrhae. But the new system worked; the Persians were unable to move far beyond the empire's frontier, and Diocletian had the time to launch a massive counterattack. Between 296 and 298, Roman armies moved east and inflicted a massive defeat on the Persians at

Ctesiphon, their worst setback since the Sassanian Empire was established in 224. Valerian's defeat in 260 had finally been avenged. Diocletian was able to impose a peace treaty in 299 in which the empire acquired substantial territory in the east, which shortened the frontier and made it easier to defend. The peace would hold for 40 years. The victory was accomplished without putting undue strain on the Roman armies stationed elsewhere; specifically, the northern tribes were unable to take advantage of Rome's focus on the east. Internal rebellions were also terminated with similar alacrity. A rebellion led by the Roman general Carausius was defeated by Diocletian's subordinates in 296, and a native insurrection in Egypt was crushed by Diocletian in 298.

Combined with the new government of the *Tetrarchy* and the new imperial administration, Diocletian's military reforms helped Rome avoid the worst problems associated with civil war and foreign invasion. Most important, he was able to give the Roman Empire 20 years of (near) peace, which allowed it to recover after the long period of anarchy. Many of the negative trends were now reversed as the population began to rise again and the economy recovered. From a military standpoint, this was extremely important, because a larger population and a healthier economy generated more revenues to pay for the much larger army and the various military reforms.

The Unconquerable Capital: Constantinople, 330

Diocletian retired in 305, and, despite his elaborate planning, a new series of civil wars broke out that would last intermittently for the next 17 years (306–323). Eventually, Flavius Valerius Constantinus (Constantine I) emerged as sole ruler of the Roman world. Constantine had a huge impact on history. Maybe most important, he granted religious freedom to the Christians in 313, beginning the process by which Rome was transformed into a Christian empire by the end of the century.

More important for the study of warfare was Constantine's foundation of a new capital in the east. By 323, the Roman world had in many ways been divided into two parts, east and west. The division was linguistic; the east spoke Greek, the west Latin. The east also had more important advantages; maybe 75 percent of the empire's population lived in the east. Most of the cities and most of the big cities were in the east. Most of the empire's wealth was in the east, and, therefore, most of the empire's tax revenues came from the east. Emperors had long recognized that the eastern provinces were their most valuable provinces and therefore spent most of their time in the east to guard against internal rebellions and external attack. Diocletian had been the first emperor to establish a new, permanent capital in the east, at Nicomedia, in Anatolia, halfway between the Danube and the Euphrates frontiers, to defend both against northern tribes and Persians. Diocletian visited Rome only twice during his reign, clearly demonstrating the insignificance of Rome politically and militarily.

The site Constantine chose was the city of Byzantium, established by Greeks from Megara in 657 B.C.E. Constantine recognized the strategic advantages of the site when he tried to besiege the city during a civil war in 323. It was situated on a triangular peninsula in the Bosphorus that measured four miles long and from one to four miles wide. The natural defenses of the city would now be dramatically augmented. Walls were constructed that stretched 14 miles around the whole peninsula. On the landward side, three walls varying from 2 to 14 feet thick and from 27 to 35 feet high protected the city. Towers, placed at regular intervals, were as tall as 70 feet high. In front of the three walls was a moat. Beyond that, Byzantium was close to the eastern provinces, close to the Euphrates and to the Danube, and astride the major trade routes between Asia and Europe and between the Black, Aegean, and Mediterranean Seas. On the northern side of the peninsula was an inlet six miles long called the Golden Horn, a perfect natural harbor for a fleet and for trade. Constantine began building his new city in 328, and it was officially dedicated on May 11, 330, for his silver jubilee, to celebrate 25 years in power (306–330). Constantine called the city New Rome, but almost from the beginning it was known as Constantinople, the City of Constantine (the modern Istanbul). For more than 1,000 years, until the development of gunpowder, the city was impregnable, and, as long as the new capital survived, at least some of the Roman Empire would survive, as well.

THE FALL OF THE WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE, 376–476

One of the great debates in history centers on the fall of the Roman Empire; specifically, what cause or causes brought about the destruction of one of the greatest and most enduring empires in history? Since the focus of this book is on warfare, we will highlight a major factor in the empire's collapse: the inability of the Roman army to cope with the massive invasions by German tribes moving across the northern frontiers.

The Late Imperial Army

The reforms of Diocletian still dominated the Roman army, which numbered more than 400,000 men, at least on paper. The two most important units of the army were the *praesentalis*, or *praesental* armies. These were the army's "in the emperor's presence," which could be used to bring aid to threatened frontiers and to help the emperor defend against Roman usurpers. Since there were now usually two emperors, each commanded a *praesental*. The emperor was in overall command, supported by his top officers, the *magister militum* (commander of the soldiers), *magister equitum* (cavalry), and *magister peditum* (infantry). On the frontier were the stationary armies, called the *limitani*. These troops lived in static forts designed to deter an external attack, and they were expected to fight only in the area around their fort. Altogether there were 30 of these units, each commanded

by a *dux*. Eighteen of the 30 were on the two most threatened frontiers: 22 in the north, along the Rhine and Danube Rivers, and 7 in the east, guarding against the Persians. In reserve were the nine field armies, the *comitatenses*, each commanded by a *comes*. These units were stationed behind the lines but were mobile elite units called on to plug any gaps in the frontier lines and to stop any incursions by foreign invaders.

Barbarians at the Gates: The Visigoths

Few tribes in history have been responsible for more destruction than the Huns. Hun attacks not only had devastating effects on China, India, and Persia but also would also play a role in the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Beginning in 91, the Black Huns had gradually moved west from east Asia, subjugating other tribes as they went. In 375, they moved from the Volga Plain to the Ukraine, northwest of the Black Sea. There they found a German tribe known as the Goths. The Goths had originated in Scandinavia and spent centuries wandering down from the north into Bohemia and, by 230 C.E., into the lands next to the Black Sea. They were Indo-Europeans and therefore distantly related linguistically to the Romans. However, the Goths were pastoralists and therefore very similar culturally to the Huns. Unfortunately, the Goths were no match for the numbers and the military ferocity of the Huns. In 375, King Ermararich committed suicide rather than submit; his successor, Withimir, tried to fight but was defeated and killed in battle. Roughly half of the Goths now submitted to the Huns; this group would be known as the Ostrogoths (East Goths). The rest came to be known as the Visigoths (West Goths), and in 376 they tried to halt the advance of the Huns at the Dneister River. By moonlight, the Huns secretly moved their cavalry across the river and surrounded the Visigoths. In the ensuing battle, the Visigoths were defeated. Some then fled into the mountains and forests of Transylvania to seek refuge. The remainder, now led by Fritigern and Alavivus, moved south across the Danube into the Roman Empire; they were granted permission by the emperor Valens (r. 364–378) to settle inside the Roman Empire, just south of the Danube River. The rulers of the provinces in which they settled were Maximus, *dux* of the lower Danube, and Lupicinus, *vicar* of Thrace. According to a contemporary Roman historian, Ammianus Marcellinus (330–395), “Their sinister greed was the source of all our troubles.”³

The reason for this assertion is that Maximus and Lupicinus imposed high taxes on the Visigoths, extorted money from them, and demanded incredibly high prices for basic goods such as food. Supposedly, the Visigoths were reduced to eating dogs to survive. Many Visigoths had initially wished to integrate into the Empire, but they were now, not surprisingly, becoming very bitter. The last straw came in 376, when Lupicinus invited the Visigoth leaders Alavivus and Fritigern to a dinner at Marcianople. At the dinner, Lupicinus killed their bodyguards and assassinated Alavivus. Fritigern, though, escaped

and incited his tribes to revolt. At this early stage, he was able to gather together roughly 5,000 soldiers.

The Roman Empire seemingly should have had little trouble dealing with this minuscule force, but the revolt began at a very bad time. Both of the emperors and the main armies they commanded were far distant; Valens was in the east fighting the Persians, while his nephew Gratian (r. 375–383) was in the west was fighting the Alemanni. There was no elite reserve anywhere nearby. Just to the north, the Romans had more than 20,000 soldiers stationed on the frontier. However, these were the *limetani* troops, commanded by Maximus, which were generally designed to remain stationary in and around their forts. Also, there were now so many potential enemies north of the Danube, including the Huns and the Alans on the lower part of the river, the Taifali along the middle Danube, and the Quadi on the upper Danube, that it would be too dangerous to move these units for fear of opening gaps in the frontier defenses that could be exploited. The field army of Thrace numbered 25,000 men but was not one, unified force. Instead, its units were divided up to guard numerous strategic positions and cities, including Marcianople. Lupicinus, the *comes* of Thrace (political and military commander of the province), was forced to take the field with only the soldiers he had, numbering maybe 5,000, roughly the same size as the Visigoth army. In the Battle of Marcianople in 376, Lupicinus and the Romans were defeated. The Visigoths proceeded to ravage parts of Thrace. More important, the Visigoths' victory encouraged their fellow countrymen serving in the Roman army as auxiliaries and those who had already been enslaved by the Romans to defect and to swell the ranks of the main Visigoth army.

In 377, Valens, still at Antioch conducting the war against the Persians, moved two units from the eastern army to Thrace; at the same time, Gratian moved units from the Gallic field army. Unfortunately, as often happened in these situations, the soldiers refused to move, in part because they usually lived in the areas in which they were stationed and did not want their homes to be bereft of troops. Many deserted, so the units sent were far weaker than expected. The *magister militum* Richomeres was in overall command, but his force of maybe 5,000 men was less numerous than the Visigoth army. The Battle of Salices, which was fought just south of the Danube, resulted in another Visigoth victory; the Roman soldiers were forced to seek refuge in various towns whose fortifications were able to resist Visigoth assault. Efforts to block the passes into southern Thrace failed. The Visigoths were now able to ravage most of the province. Ammianus Marcellinus described their devastations:

Everything was involved in a foul orgy of rapine and slaughter, bloodshed and fire, and frightful atrocities were inflicted on the bodies of free men. Sights as fearful to relate as to behold met men's sorrowing eyes; women driven along under the lash distraught with fear, small children clinging to their mothers. One could hear the cries of boys and girls of high birth led by their cruel captors, and see grown maidens and chaste wives bewailing their fate. Here a man of good birth, who not long before

had been rich and free, was being dragged like a wild beast, railing at the cruelty and blindness of Fortune, driven from his home which he saw reduced to dust and ashes, and placed at the mercy of a brutal conqueror either to be killed or to endure the blows and tortures of slavery.⁴

The “Black Day of the Roman Army”: Adrianople, 378

Since half-measures had not ended the Visigoth threat, it now became obvious that a major effort would be necessary. Valens made peace with the Persians, but he was obliged to leave substantial forces along the eastern frontier to guard against a breach of the treaty. Gratian drove back the Alemanni to free reinforcements for the east. In 378, Valens was finally ready. He marched out with an army of 20,000 Romans to face roughly 12,000 Visigoths. Reinforcements had been sent from the west by Gratian, but they were fewer than expected because the Alemanni, hearing of the proposed move against the Visigoths, attacked again in 378. However, Valens did not even wait for the reinforcements, because he wished to win the glory for himself. On August 9, 379, the Battle of Adrianople was fought. It was a very hot day, and Valens made his army march eight miles to the Visigoth position. The Romans were tired, thirsty, and hungry, while the Visigoths were fresh. The Roman scouts had discovered the main body of Visigoth soldiers but had failed to find the Visigoth's cavalry, which was further up the valley to the northwest. Valens was under the mistaken impression that he had a huge numerical advantage, since the Visigoth cavalry was absent. Therefore, he did not allow his men to rest after their long march but ordered them to attack immediately. The battle began, and, to the great shock of the Romans, the Visigoth cavalry appeared, seemingly out of nowhere, and attacked the Roman left wing. The Roman left was crushed, and its soldiers either were killed or fled. The Visigoth cavalry then wheeled eastward and hit the Roman right from the sides and from behind. At the same time, the Visigoths' left was already pushing back the Roman right. The Roman infantry was trapped, and the men were either killed or forced to flee. Two-thirds of the Roman army died on the field, including the Emperor Valens, who perished trying to escape. According to Ammianus, this was “a black day for the Roman army,” second only to the disaster at Cannae 594 years before. In fact, Adrianople was worse than Cannae because it began the long process that would bring down the Western Roman Empire.

After Adrianople, the Visigoths moved southeast to attack Constantinople, but that city was impregnable, and, like so many other invaders, the Visigoths were forced to retreat. However, the Romans did not have the power to stop the Visigoths, and the new emperor, Theodosius I (r. 379–395), was forced to make peace in 382. The Visigoths would now have their own independent kingdom within the Roman Empire, immune from Roman law. They would pay no taxes to Rome; instead, Rome would pay tribute to them. They would serve in the Roman army, but in their own units, under the command of their own officers. All of these concessions by the Romans were unprecedented;

various tribes had been allowed into the empire before, but never had these tribes constituted independent entities within the empire.

The success of the Visigoths was only the beginning. Now other tribes would be inspired to try similar methods. Even though each individual tribe had relatively few soldiers (between 10,000 and 20,000 men), and even though these tribes rarely if ever united, the sheer number of different threats the empire faced made defense difficult. There were more than two dozen major tribes, mostly German, threatening Rome from the north at any given time. A partial list:

West Germans

1. Suevi
2. Marcomanni
3. Quadi
4. Thuringians
5. Alemanni
6. Franks
7. Frisians
8. Saxons
9. Angles
10. Jutes

East Germans

11. Visigoths
12. Ostrogoths
13. Gepids
14. Heruli
15. Vandals
16. Burgundians
17. Longobards
18. Rugii
19. Scirii

Celts

20. Picts
21. Irish
22. Scots
23. Welsh

Non-Indo-Europeans

24. Scythians
25. Huns

What made matters even worse is that Rome was now always on the defensive, waiting in stationary, fortified positions for an attack. The initiative was left to Rome's enemies, who could strike anywhere at any time. In this era of slow communications, it was very difficult to move soldiers quickly to the proper place. The western Roman Empire had, it is estimated, 25 million people. Its army had a paper strength of 135,000 frontier soldiers and 115,000 soldiers in reserve, for a total of 250,000. In reality,

the numbers were far lower. Altogether, in the west there may have been as few as 70,000 soldier: 5,000 on the Rhine River, 30,000 in Italy, 30,000 in Gaul, and 5,000 in Britain. Problems with the birth rate, war, crime, famine, the economy, and plague all meant a dramatic drop in the population. And, with fewer people generating tax revenues, there was less money to finance the army. The breakdown of the government's ability to collect taxes exacerbated the problem as corruption and inefficiency took a toll. There were very few tax collectors for an empire of many millions. As the tax burden fell on a smaller and smaller group of people, the remainder had to pay higher and higher tax rates. The burden was especially hard on the peasants, who paid, it is estimated, 67 percent of their goods to the state. Not surprisingly many peasants simply fled from their cities or farms to avoid ruinous taxation; some even joined German tribes who at least imposed far lower tax rates. As the state became less able to protect its citizens, especially its humblest citizens, there was a dramatic decline in the willingness of the people to sacrifice for it, an unwillingness to contribute money that would end up in the pockets of corrupt officials, an unwillingness to contribute time to public projects, and, most of all, an unwillingness to serve in the armies. As a result of these problems, soldiers' pay was sporadic at best, so, not surprisingly, Roman citizens often engaged in draft dodging and desertion.

Theodosius (r. 378–395) decided to use German soldiers to fill the ranks. He allowed German tribes to settle on vacant land within the empire and then signed treaties with these tribes similar to the one signed with the Visigoths. These tribes would live under their own laws and would serve in the Roman army, in their own units, under their own officers. As time went on, a greater and greater percentage of "Roman" soldiers were actually German. In provinces such as Belgica, the percentage of German soldiers reached 70, and, in some cases, whole units were made up of German tribesmen. Franks guarded Rome's frontiers along the Rhine, meaning that Germans were defending Rome against German invasion. As time went on, German leaders became officers within the army and parlayed their rank into higher and higher positions within the Roman government. A German could never become emperor, but he could rise to the number two position, called the *magister militi*, which conferred command of the infantry, cavalry, navy, and German settlements. They eventually took charge of nominating officers for the army and officials for the government. A great percentage of the army, a great percentage of the officers, and many of the top political officials were German. With their rise in the army and the Roman government, the Germans now gained intimate knowledge of the Roman Empire. They now knew how the Romans fought, how they conducted their diplomacy, and how their political and military institutions functioned. They now knew that the Roman Empire was weak, that the emperors were generally incompetent, and that the Romans were constantly engaged in civil wars. No longer would the Germans be manipulated by Roman money and diplomacy; instead, they could now use their power and knowledge far more effectively

against the empire. German leaders and soldiers, who were supposed to be defending the empire against other German tribes, were not always loyal to Rome but often acted in their own interests. This would be a major cause of Rome's eventual fall.

“The Brightest Light Was Extinguished”: The Sack of Rome and the Fall of the West, 395–476

Theodosius died in 395. He was the last Roman emperor to rule a unified empire. After his death, the empire was divided among his two sons; 18-year-old Arcadius (r. 395–408) ruled the east, and Honorius (r. 395–423) age 10, would rule the west. Obviously, Honorius was not old enough to rule on his own behalf; therefore, Stilicho (360–408) was appointed regent. Stilicho was a German from the Vandal tribe who had risen up through the ranks to eventually become a trusted adviser to Theodosius and who had governed the west while Theodosius was in the east. After Theodosius's death, Stilicho acted as regent for Honorius, and, in 398, Stilicho married his own daughter, Maria, aged 3, to Honorius. Stilicho was very ambitious and may have even have planned to make himself emperor. Roman political officials were very jealous of Stilicho, believing that he favored Germans over Romans in the government and in the army. And they wondered whether he was really doing his best to stop the invasions of the various German tribes. They worried that he was far more sympathetic to his fellow Germans than to the Roman Empire.

His dealings with the Visigoths seemed to confirm these suspicions. In 395, the Visigoths, under their leader Alaric (r. 395–410), had risen up in rebellion after Theodosius's death. Stilicho had been unable to defeat Alaric during campaigns in 395 and 397. Stilicho then appointed Alaric *magister militum* in charge of the Balkans. Later, in 402, Alaric led his Visigoths into Italy. This time, in two battles at Polentia and Verona in 403, Stilicho defeated Alaric. Unfortunately, Alaric was able to flee back across the Alps with most of his army. In 405, Alaric invaded again at the same time a German leader named Radagaisus led an army of Ostrogoths, Vandals, Alans, and Quadi across the Alps into Italy. Stilicho called in military units from the Rhine frontier and used these to defeat the Germans; Radagaisus was executed, and Alaric was driven out. Though Stilicho was victorious, the Roman frontier along the Rhine was now undefended. On the last day of 406, the river froze, allowing numerous German tribes to enter the empire, including the Vandals, Burgundians, Suevi, Quadi, and Alemanni, all of whom plundered and ravaged Gaul. The next year, Constantine, the Roman governor in Britain, was proclaimed Emperor Constantine III (r. 406–411) by his troops; he pulled his army out of Britain and invaded Gaul and then Spain. Britain was abandoned and would no longer be a part of the Roman Empire. Various tribes, including the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Picts, and Celts, invaded Britain; the Britons and the Romans left behind were forced to fend for themselves.⁵

In 408, another German attack on Italy occurred. This time, a coalition of Vandals, Ostrogoths, Quadi, and Alamenni invaded. Stilicho was able to defeat them and drive them out, but once again the vast majority of the enemy escaped. The Roman ministers of Honorius thought the Germans continued to escape and return year after year thanks to the machinations of Stilicho, who was purposely letting them go. These ministers, led by Olympius, hatched a conspiracy against Stilicho. They bribed the Roman soldiers to suddenly assassinate Stilicho's German officers and ministers. Stilicho refused to try and escape, since he did not want to precipitate a civil war, and was arrested. He was put on trial and then executed. His two daughters were executed, as well, and his son, who had fled to a church seeking sanctuary, was also killed. After Stilicho's fall, there was a Roman reaction against the Germans and German power. A widespread belief had taken hold that if these German immigrants were driven out, Rome's problems would be solved. Massacres took place all over Italy as German soldiers and officials were hunted down and killed, along with their families. Thousands of German soldiers, a large percentage of the Roman army, now fled to Alaric.

In 408, Alaric's forces, swelled by these German refugees from Italy, crossed the Alps once more. Italy was without an army and without a leader. The Emperor Honorius was essentially hiding out in Ravenna, which was protected by impenetrable swamps. Honorius tried to call for help from the east, but in 408 Arcadius had died and had been replaced by his young son Theodosius II (r. 408–450), age seven. No help was forthcoming. Alaric stayed in Italy into 409 and was then paid a huge ransom by the Romans to leave. He returned in 410 and attacked Rome itself. The walls of Rome were 11 miles long, 13 feet thick and 67 feet high, so Alaric surrounded the city and waited until its supplies ran out. On August 24, 410, the starving Roman people opened the gate to Alaric and the Visigoths. It was the first time in exactly 800 years, since the Celts had taken the city in 390 B.C.E., that Rome had been captured by a foreign enemy. The Visigoths pillaged for three days and then wandered off. Rome was no longer an important political or military center, but it was still the symbolic heart of the empire. People everywhere were shocked by Rome's capture, including St. Jerome (347–420), who was in Bethlehem when he heard of the city's fall in September of 410:

I was stunned and stupefied, so much so that I could not think about anything else day and night. I could not even open my mouth, hanging there, caught between hope and despair. I was torturing myself with the thought of what others had suffered. The brightest light of all the lands was extinguished, the head of the whole Roman Empire was lopped off, after the whole world had perished in a single city, I fell silent and was humbled, and I kept my silence and my sorrow was renewed. My hurt grew warm within me and fire blazed in my thoughts.⁶

Rome, the Eternal City, had fallen to invaders. The ultimate end of the Western Empire was not far off.

The sack of Rome was certainly a symbolic blow to the empire, but it was not nearly the most important event during this time. The first decade of

the fifth century in many ways helped to seal Rome's fate. Multiple invasions helped to ruin the Roman economy and deprive the state of tax revenues needed to pay the army to defend the state. Italy suffered three invasions (401–402, 405–406, 408–412), and Gaul was overrun in 407 after the Rhine froze and the Roman armies were either withdrawn or disintegrated. In 409, the barbarians reached Spain and proceeded to ravage the land. Honorius also had internal challengers as numerous usurpers rose in rebellion, most notably Constantine III, the Roman commander in Britain, who removed all Roman troops from the province to prosecute the civil war, essentially abandoning the island to the various tribes. With Roman armies often most concerned with fighting each other, there was no unified response to these incursions. With most of the western empire occupied by foreign invaders, the provinces could no longer be taxed to support the government and the army. The only region still safe, the only region still providing taxes and other supplies at least until 429, was North Africa. The rest of the west was lost and would never be recaptured by Rome.

After taking Rome, the Visigoths moved south, where Alaric died a few months later. Then the Visigoths wandered out of Italy into southern Gaul and northern Spain, where they finally settled down. In 419, they were given an independent kingdom by Honorius, which would last until the coming of the Moors in 711. This was a first: a specific parcel of imperial land had now been detached and ceded to the invaders. The Visigoths took two-thirds of the land for themselves and left one-third for the local Romans. This set a precedent for others to follow. The Alans forced the Roman government to cede land in two separate places: around Valence in 440 and in northern Gaul in 442. In 443, the Burgundians received land in the Upper Rhone valley. The Vandals, who were so destructive that they gave us words like “vandalize” and “vandalism,” had moved across the frozen Rhine in 406 and into Spain in 409; then, in 429, under King Gaiseric (r. 428–477), they commandeered a fleet (becoming the only tribe to do so) and moved over to North Africa. Their expropriation of lands in Numidia and Mauretania was confirmed by treaty in 436. Then, in 439, they moved east and captured Carthage. The Romans were forced to recognize the independence of the new Vandal kingdom in a treaty of 442. This was another huge blow to the faltering Roman state as the last bastion of tax revenues and grain was cut off. This did not stop the Vandal rampages; in 455, they became the second tribe to capture Rome and during a two-week span did a far more thorough job of looting the city than the Visigoths had done 45 years earlier.

THE END OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

In 476, Odoacer, a Scirian, led a band of tribes, including Heruli, Rugii, and other former Hun subjects, into Italy, defeating the army of the emperor Romulus Augustulus (r. 475–476). Odoacer decided to end the charade: on September 4, 476, he deposed Romulus Augustulus and did not bother to

appoint another puppet. He wrote to the eastern emperor Zeno (r. 474–491), saying that there was no longer a need for a western ruler and returning to him the western imperial insignia. Odoacer was made a patrician by Zeno and would rule on his behalf. The year 476 has always been used to mark the official end of the Roman Empire in the west, 1,229 years after the city was established by Romulus. A new map had now been drawn in western Europe; in place of the empire were numerous Germanic kingdoms:

Britain: Angles/Saxons/Jutes

Gaul: Franks/Burgundians/Alemanni

Spain: Visigoths

North Africa: Vandals

Italy: Odoacer, before being replaced by the Ostrogoths in 493

This new Europe remained Christian, as the German tribes all converted at some point. However, the German tribes were unable to sustain Roman civilization; 476 marked the end of the Roman Empire in the west and the beginning of a long dark period characterized by a dramatic drop in the population and in the number and size of cities. Rome, which had once numbered a million people, saw its population fall to 17,000, leaving it still the biggest city in the west. Trade and wealth declined, and art and architecture became far less sophisticated. Basic skills such as the ability to read and write were largely forgotten outside the hierarchy of the church.

The east survived. The people there continued to call themselves Romans and their empire the Roman Empire; they never relinquished their claims to the western provinces. Historians, though, have always labeled this empire the Byzantine Empire to distinguish it from the older state that had now ended. There were many reasons why the east survived. It had a larger population and greater wealth, enabling it to finance a large army. More important, the eastern provinces provided plenty of tough soldiers for the army, from Isauria or Thrace or Illyria, for example, so it was unnecessary to import larger numbers of German troops of questionable loyalty. A radical reorganization of the eastern army took place in 400; it began when the eastern Romans, like their western counterparts, began to believe that the Germans soldiers and their commanders within the army were unwilling to properly defend the empire and shrank from attacking their own people. This led to a massacre in which the gates of Constantinople were shut and 7,000 Germans were butchered, including those who fled into churches for sanctuary. Their leaders were declared public enemies, hunted down, and killed. Germans were then expelled from the army. From that point on, when Germans were recruited, they were recruited to serve individually, not as part of an ethnic auxiliary unit, and they would be led by Roman, not German, officers. Because of these changes, the eastern army remained loyal at the same time western armies, largely consisting of Germans, began to turn against the empire. The eastern empire's frontiers were easier to defend, thanks to the Balkan mountains, the Black Sea, and the deserts to the east and south. It helped, too, that the Sassanid Persians

had their own barbarian troubles, such as the invasion of the White Huns in 484, so that there was generally peace along the eastern frontier for just over a century (395–518). The east was blessed with generally good leadership and, more important, an almost complete absence of civil strife. There were only seven rulers from the death of Theodosius I until the accession of Justinian I (395–527), bringing added stability.⁷ The final ingredient was the impregnability of Constantinople; dozens of invaders would attack the city walls and fail. As long as the capital survived, at least some of the empire survived, as well. The fact that most tribes, aside from the Vandals, never mastered the art of naval warfare was crucial. This made it impossible to completely besiege Constantinople and also ensured that invaders could not cross over to Anatolia. Therefore, the most valuable provinces of the east remained untouched. The Byzantine Empire was able to survive the massive invasions of the fourth and fifth century, though it did not have the power to save the west. The Byzantine Empire never went through the dark period that followed in the west but instead maintained and preserved a high level of Greek, Roman, and Christian culture. It would survive for nearly a thousand years, with varying degrees of fortune, until 1453, when the Turks, led by Mehmet II “The Conqueror” (r. 1451–1481), took the city and made it the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

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Notes

CHAPTER ONE

1. The major periods of Egyptian history are:

Dynastic Period c.3100–2700 B.C.E.

Old Kingdom 2700–2150

First Intermediate Period 2150–2050

Middle Kingdom 2050–1651

Second Intermediate Period 1652–1551

New Kingdom 1551–1069

Egyptian history was further subdivided into 31 dynasties. Dynasty I was established by Narmer (or Menes) who first unified Egypt circa 3100 B.C.E. Dynasty XXXI was the Ptolemaic Dynasty, founded by Ptolemy, a general of Alexander the Great, after Alexander's death in 323.

2. Translation by A. Gardiner, in *Egypt of the Pharaohs*: 155. Oxford University Press. 1961.

3. Translation by A. Gardiner, in *Egypt of the Pharaohs*: 166. Oxford University Press. 1961.

4. Ahmose, *Autobiography*, trans. S. R. Snape. In M. Lichtheim (Ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature II: The New Kingdom*: 12–15. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976.

5. M. Lichtheim (Ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature II: The New Kingdom*: 64–66. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976.

6. M. Lichtheim (Ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature II: The New Kingdom*: 65–66. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976.

7. At this same time, the city of Troy in northwestern Anatolia was destroyed as well, possibly giving rise to the numerous myths surrounding the Trojan War. Later Greeks believed that Troy was destroyed in 1184 after a 10-year siege.

CHAPTER TWO

1. This quote later became the official slogan of the U.S. Postal Service.

2. Herodotus, 7.41–42. In *The Histories*, trans. A. de Selincourt. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1954.

3. Herodotus, 7.60–61. In *The Histories*, trans. A. de Selincourt. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1954.

CHAPTER THREE

1. Homer, *Iliad* 16.157–166, 177, 179–180, trans. E.V. Rieu. London: Penguin, 1950.
2. Homer, *Iliad* 6.568–574, trans. E. V. Rieu. London: Penguin, 1950.
3. Homer, *Iliad* 9.499–504, trans. E. V. Rieu. London: Penguin, 1950.
4. Homer, *Iliad* 20.234–236, trans. E. V. Rieu. London: Penguin, 1950.
5. Homer, *Iliad* 20.251–279, trans. E. V. Rieu. London: Penguin, 1950.
6. Homer, *Iliad* 20.450–454, 515–519, 530–544, trans. E. V. Rieu. London: Penguin, 1950.
7. Homer, *Iliad* 12.360–367, trans. E. V. Rieu. London: Penguin, 1950.
8. Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 15.695–696. In *The Ancient World: Readings in Social and Cultural History*, trans. D.B. Nagle & S.M. Burstein. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002.
9. Homer, *Odyssey* 9.44–49, trans. E. V. Rieu; revised trans. D.C.H. Rieu. London: Penguin, 1991.
10. Homer, *Odyssey* 9.172–184, trans. E. V. Rieu; revised trans. D.C.H. Rieu. London: Penguin, 1991.
11. A number of recent studies have attempted to analyze the similarities between the ancient and modern battle experiences. In particular, see: Shay, J. *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*. New York: Scribner, 1994; Trittle, L. *From Melos to My Lai: War and Survival*. London: Routledge, 2000; and Daly, G. *Cannae. The Experience of Battle in the Second Punic War*. London: Routledge, 2002.
12. Tyrtaeus fragment 10. In *The Ancient World: Readings in Social and Cultural History*, trans. D. B. Nagle and S. M. Burstein. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002.
13. Tyrtaeus, fragment 10. In *The Ancient World: Readings in Social and Cultural History*, trans. D. B. Nagle and S. M. Burstein. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002.
14. Thucydides 5.71. In *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Warner. London: Penguin, 1954.
15. Herodotus 8.142–144. In *The Histories*, trans. A. de Selincourt. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1954.
16. After the battle, the Athenians sent a runner, whose name was Pheidippides, back to Athens with the news of the victory. Pheidippides ran the entire 26 miles. When he got to Athens, he exclaimed, “Nika! Nika! [Victory! Victory!]” and then he dropped dead, a sad end to the world’s first marathon. The route of Pheidippides was followed during the marathon event at the 2004 Athens Olympics.
17. A monument to the fallen was erected in Athens; the dead were buried on the battlefield in a mound that can still be seen today.
18. According to Spartan legend, a mythical lawgiver named Lycurgus created this system c.800 B.C.E.; therefore, it is known as the Lycurgan system.
19. The *lambda* was shaped like an upside down “V”; it was the symbol in the Greek alphabet for the “L” sound and the first letter in Lacadaemonians, meaning the men of the land of Sparta.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. The Greeks called themselves *Hellenes* and their land *Hellas*, hence the name for their alliance.
2. This battle was dramatized in two Hollywood movies: *The 300 Spartans* (1962) and *300* (2006).

3. Herodotus, 7.209–212. In *The Histories*, trans. A. de Selincourt. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1954.

4. Herodotus, 7.227. In *The Histories*, trans. A. de Selincourt. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1954.

5. Herodotus, 7.226. In *The Histories*, trans. A. de Selincourt. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1954.

6. Herodotus, 7.228. In *The Histories*, trans. A. de Selincourt. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1954.

7. Aeschylus, *Persians*, 404–406. In *The Plays*, trans. G. M. Cookson. Dent, 1960. The Athenian Aeschylus was one of the greatest playwrights of ancient Greek. However, when he wrote his epitaph, he did not mention his prize-winning dramas but instead recorded his military service at Marathon for posterity: “His famed valor Marathon could tell, and the long-haired Persian knows well.”

8. Plutarch, *Life of Aristides*, 18. In *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. London: Penguin, 1960.

9. Thucydides, 1.88. In *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Warner. London: Penguin, 1954.

10. Thucydides, 2.12. In *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Warner. London: Penguin, 1954.

11. Thucydides claims that Cleon was so unpopular that everyone in Athens was happy to see him go: either he would succeed or he would be killed. Thucydides, though, was not an unbiased source; in 424, he was exiled from Athens by the assembly at Cleon’s insistence.

12. Thucydides, 4.32. In *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Warner. London: Penguin, 1954.

13. Thucydides, 4.40. In *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Warner. London: Penguin, 1954.

14. Thucydides, 5.15, 17. In *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Warner. London: Penguin, 1954.

15. Thucydides, 3.68. In *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Warner. London: Penguin, 1954.

16. Thucydides, 3.69–85. Bloody civil wars within individual *poleis* became endemic. The civil war on Corcyra in 427 was the first example.

17. Thucydides, 5.84–116. The debate between the Athenian envoys and the representatives of Melos has been immortalized in Thucydides’ famous “Melian Dialogue.”

18. Euripides, *The Trojan Women*: 782–789. In *Electra and Other Plays*, trans. J. Davie. London: Penguin, 1998.

19. Diodorus Siculus, 13.39–40. In *The Library of History of Diodorus of Sicily* trans. C. H. Oldfather. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962.

20. Thucydides, 8.106. In *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Warner. London: Penguin, 1954.

21. Xenophon, 1.1.23. In *A History of My Times*, trans. R. Warner. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1966.

22. The process by which they were condemned was illegal, but the efforts of the famous philosopher Socrates to prevent the generals’ execution failed.

23. Plutarch, *Life of Alcibiades*, 36. In *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. London: Penguin, 1960.

24. Plutarch, *Life of Lysander*, 10. In *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. London: Penguin, 1960.

25. Plutarch, *Life of Lysander*, 13. In *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. London: Penguin, 1960.

26. Plutarch, *Life of Lysander*, 15. In *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. London: Penguin, 1960.

27. Plutarch *Life of Pelopidas*, 18. In *The Age of Alexander*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1973.

28. Plutarch, *Life of Pelopidas*, 22. In *The Age of Alexander*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1973.

29. Xenophon, 7.5.26–27. In *A History of My Times*, trans. R. Warner. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1966.

30. Xenophon, 7.5.27. In *A History of My Times*, trans. R. Warner. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1966.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. In one famous example, Alexander the Great held a drinking contest in which the winner, Promachus, downed 12 quarts of unwatered wine. Unfortunately, Promachus and 41 other competitors died from alcohol poisoning.

2. Demosthenes of Athens, when told that his bitter enemy, Philip, was the drinker with the greatest capacity among the Macedonians, replied that that would be great for a sponge but not for a king.

3. Plutarch, *Life of Demosthenes*, 20. In *The Age of Alexander: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1973.

4. Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 33. In *The Age of Alexander: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1973.

5. Arrian, 3.14. In *The Campaigns of Alexander*, trans. A. de Selincourt. London: Penguin, 1958.

6. Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 37. In *The Age of Alexander: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1973.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Antigonos (382–301). Friend and coeval of Philip II, the only general left in 317 from Philip's generation. When Alexander marched through Anatolia in 334, he left Antigonos behind to govern the province of Phrygia. Antigonos then disappears for the rest of Alexander's reign, only to dramatically reappear after Alexander's death in 323.

Eumenes (360–315). The only Greek to hold an important rank in Alexander's army. His first command was in India, and he became *hipparch* in 324.

2. During their second war with Rome (218–202), the Carthaginians discovered a way to quickly kill an elephant that was running amuck: riders would carry a mallet and a long spike, and when the elephant panicked, they would drive the spike between its head and neck.

3. Demetrios Poliokertes (339–283). Most fathers during this time did not trust their sons, but on one famous occasion Antigonos—to the shock of his audience—allowed Demetrios to come into his presence armed and to sit down beside him, demonstrating the very close relationship between the two.

4. By 304, all of Alexander's successors had begun to use the title “king.”

5. Ptolemy (360–283). A boyhood friend of Alexander, was with Alexander all the way to India. He was made *somatophylake* in 330 and took over the *satrapy* of Egypt after Alexander's death and continued to rule there.

Seleucus (358–281). Another boyhood friend of Alexander, he commanded the elite infantry after 330. He was with Alexander all the way to India, was with him when he fell ill in 323, and served as *satrap* of Babylonia and Assyria and other eastern *satrapies*, the realm that came to be known as the Seleucid Empire.

Lysimachus (361–281). *Somatophylake*, he was with Alexander throughout his campaigns and became *satrap* of Thrace.

Cassander (355–297). Son of Antipater, he was governor of Macedonia and Greece in Alexander's absence in the east, was with Alexander in Babylon at the time of his death, and eventually took over Macedonia and most of Greece after his father's death.

6. Plutarch, *Life of Demetrios*, 28. *The Age of Alexander: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1973.

7. Between 308 and 303, Seleucus tried to emulate Alexander by moving east and invading India. However, when Alexander attacked in 327, India was divided into numerous independent kingdoms. Now, most of India had been unified by Chandragupta Maurya, who had established the Mauryan Empire, the greatest Indian state in history until that time. So, whereas Alexander could fight one Indian ruler at a time, Seleucus was forced to fight Chandragupta's unified army, which may have numbered as many as 500,000 men and 5,000 war elephants. Needless to say, Seleucus was not as successful as Alexander and was forced to sign a peace treaty in which he forever relinquished any claim to territory in the Indian subcontinent and to provinces once controlled by Persia and later by Alexander along India's borders. However, in the long run, this was beneficial to Seleucus because he would no longer waste resources trying to conquer and keep these far-flung eastern lands; more important, as part of his agreement with Chandragupta, he received 500 war elephants.

8. Plutarch, *Life of Demetrios*, 29. In *The Age of Alexander: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1973.

9. Plutarch, *Life of Demetrios*, 29. In *The Age of Alexander: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1973.

10. The omens seemingly had been against Antigonus. When he left his tent before the battle, he had tripped and fallen, a very bad sign. Also, his son Demetrios had had a dream in which Alexander had appeared and, because the password of the army was "Zeus and victory" and not "Alexander and victory," had declared he would help Antigonus's enemies.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Most senators were part of the Roman nobility.

2. Plutarch, *Life of Aemilius Paullus*, 32–35. In *Plutarch: The Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, trans. John Dryden. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952.

3. The Social War (91–89) was the rebellion of Rome's Italian allies. The revolt ended when the Romans agreed to grant citizenship to everyone south of the Po.

4. The Roman Legion consisted of the following:

1 legion = 10 cohorts

1 cohort = 3 maniples

1 maniple = 2 centuries

1 century = 10 *contubernia*

1 *contubernium* = 8 soldiers

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. cos. = consul. The minimum age for the office of consul was 41 (for patricians) or 42 (for plebians).

2. Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*, 16. In *The Age of Alexander: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1973.

3. Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*, 19. In *The Age of Alexander: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1973.

4. Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*, 21. In *The Age of Alexander: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1973. Hence the origin of the term "Pyrrhic victory."

5. The Romans called the Carthaginians "Punicae" (Phoenicians); hence the name for the wars between the two cities.

6. Polybius, 1.63. In *The Rise of the Roman Empire*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. London: Penguin, 1979.

7. The Romans attributed the naval defeat to the commanding admiral P. Claudius Pulcher's (cos. 249) failure to heed the religious omens. Discovering that the sacred chickens would not eat before the battle began (a bad sign), he tossed them into the sea proclaiming: "If they will not eat then let them drink!" No one was surprised when he lost the battle.

8. In fact, the *corvus* completely disappeared from later Roman naval warfare. It is possible that, despite its benefits, it made the vessels too top-heavy and therefore more vulnerable to rough seas.

9. Livy, 21.1. In *The War with Hannibal*, trans. A. de Selincourt. London: Penguin, 1965.

10. The Schlieffen Plan employed by Germany at the outset of World War I was intended to be a "colossal" Cannae. Later, generals as diverse as Napoleon and Norman Schwarzkopf would talk of Hannibal as one of the great captains of history. Cannae and the double envelopment are still taught at military academies today.

11. Livy, 22.51. In *The War with Hannibal*, trans. A. de Selincourt. London: Penguin, 1965.

12. Livy, 22.51. In *The War with Hannibal*, trans. A. de Selincourt. London: Penguin, 1965.

13. Livy, 30.20. In *The War with Hannibal*, trans. A. de Selincourt. London: Penguin, 1965.

14. Livy, 31.7. In *Rome and the Mediterranean*, trans. H. Bettenson. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1976.

15. Plutarch, *Life of Flamininus*, 14. In *Plutarch: The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, translated by John Dryden. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952.

16. After Zama, Hannibal had become a popular politician, but his success with the citizens of Carthage made him many enemies among the city's wealthier elements. His political enemies then sent to Rome, informing the Senate that Hannibal was planning another war. Rome demanded that Carthage hand over Hannibal, prompting him to flee the city, eventually ending up in the east.

17. Amazingly, he did not give Hannibal much responsibility in his army; instead, one of the ancient world's greatest generals was given only a small flotilla to command.

18. Scipio, Hannibal's opponent at Zama, died the same year, at Liternum, in Italy.

19. To allay the fears of the superstitious soldiers, C. Sulpicius Gallus, a military tribune, addressed the men at an assembly to inform them that a lunar eclipse would

occur the next evening. He assured them that this should not be taken as a bad omen but instead was a predictable, natural occurrence.

20. Plutarch, *Life of Aemilius Paullus*. In *Plutarch: The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, trans. John Dryden. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952.

21. The Roman emperor Augustus would build a new city on the site just over a century later. Roman Carthage would become, after Rome itself, the greatest city of the western Mediterranean.

22. Appian, *Punic Wars*, 132. In *Appian's Roman History*, vol. I, trans. H. White. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Plutarch, *Life of Tiberius Gracchus*, 9. In *Makers of Rome*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1965.

2. It is unknown whether Marius was responsible for all or only some of these reforms.

3. The emperor Diocletian (r. 284–305 C.E.) was the only other Roman ruler to voluntarily give up absolute power.

4. Caesar, *Galic War*, 4.25, trans. H. J. Edwards. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

5. Caesar, *The Gallic War*, 7.84, trans. H. J. Edwards. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

6. Caesar, *The Gallic War*, 8.44, trans. H. J. Edwards. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

7. Plutarch, *Life of Caesar* 32. In *Fall of the Roman Republic*, trans. R. Warner. London: Penguin, 1958.

8. Suetonius, *Life of Julius Caesar*, 68. In *The Twelve Caesars*, trans. R. Graves. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1957.

9. Caesar, *Civil War*, 3.64, trans. J. F. Gardner. London: Penguin, 1976.

10. Caesar, *Civil War*, 3.72, trans. J. F. Gardner. London: Penguin, 1976.

11. Caesar, *Civil War*, 3.91, trans. J. F. Gardner. London: Penguin, 1976.

12. Ptolemy XIII was the descendant of Ptolemy I, a general of Alexander the Great's who had taken over Egypt after Alexander's death, in 323. Egypt was now the last surviving Hellenistic state: both the kingdom of Macedonia (168) and the Seleucid Empire (64) had been destroyed by Rome.

13. Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*, 46. In *Fall of the Roman Republic*, trans. R. Warner. London: Penguin, 1958.

14. When Caesar disembarked, he tripped and fell. This was considered to be a bad omen by his superstitious men, so, thinking quickly, Caesar spread out his arms and cried: "Africa, I've got you!"

15. Because of the great success of Scipio Africanus at Zama and Scipio Aemilianus in the Third Punic War, it was said that no Scipio could be defeated in Africa. So, to get around the omen and to reassure his men, Caesar brought with him to Africa a nonentity named Cornelius Scipio Salvito.

16. Octavius's new official name was Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. He, of course, called himself Caesar, though historians generally use the name Octavian.

17. Cassius, Dio, 50.24. In *The Roman History: The Reign of Augustus*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. London: Penguin, 1987.

18. Plutarch, *Life of Antonius*, 66. In *Makers of Rome*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1965.

19. Plutarch, *Life of Antonius*, 67. In *Makers of Rome*, trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1965.

20. Octavian spared the children of Antonius and Cleopatra; they were raised in his household in Rome along with Antonius's children by his sister Octavia. However, Caesar's son Ptolemy XV Caesarion was executed because, as Octavian put it, "it is not good to have too many Caesars."

CHAPTER TEN

1. A *centurion* named Lucilius in the Pannonian army was nicknamed "Fetch Another" because, when he broke a stick over a poor unfortunate soldier's back, he would loudly call for a replacement.

2. Rome's fifth emperor, Nero, would ignore this policy, with dire consequences.

3. Originally, the empire had 28 legions, but 3 (XVII, XVIII, XIX) were destroyed in the disaster in the Teutoburg Forest in Germany in 9 C.E.

4. Only two date to the empire: Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Gaetulicus and P. Gabinius Secundus Chaucicus.

5. Problems would develop later, when the Guard, conscious of its power, often intervened in the imperial succession and decided who would rule Rome (in 41 and 193 C.E., for example).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. All dates are now C.E. unless otherwise noted.

2. Illyria is a region in the Balkans east of the Adriatic, south of the Danube, and north of Greece.

3. Ammianus Marcellinus, 31.4. In *The Later Roman Empire*, trans. W. Hamilton. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1986.

4. Ammianus Marcellinus, 31.8. In *The Later Roman Empire*, trans. W. Hamilton. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1986.

5. It was from this period of anarchy and war that the legends of King Arthur arose.

6. Jerome, *On Ezechiel*, 1. In "Late Antiquity: Before and After." *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, vol. 134. Translated by J. O' Donnell. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004, 208.

7. Eastern Roman/Byzantine Emperors:

378–395: Theodosius I

395–408: Arcadius

408–450: Theodosius II

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457–474: Leo I

474–491: Zeno

491–518: Anastasius I

518–527: Justin

527–565: Justinian I

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- Julius Caesar and the Battle of Alesia*. In *Great Commanders*, Ambrose Video Publis, 1993. General overview of Caesar's campaigns with a special focus on the Battle of Alesia in 52.
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Films That Include Scenes of Ancient Battle

- Alexander*. Warner Brothers, 2004. Despite some very curious editing choices (specifically, the movie jumps back and forth between different time periods), there are some very good scenes in this movie that dramatize Alexander's march. Most notable is the recreation of the Battle of Gaugamela, the best Hollywood rendition of the Macedonian *phalanx* in action.
- Alexander the Great*. MGM, 1955. An unintentionally comic look at Alexander's career; entertaining but not necessarily historically accurate; nor does it provide much in the way of battle scenes.

Ben-Hur. Warner Brothers, 1959. Contains the best recreation of an ancient naval battle in a Hollywood movie.

Cleopatra. 20th Century Fox, 1963. Two good scenes. The first recreates an attack by the Egyptians on Caesar and his men in Alexandria in 48 B.C.E. The second, near the end of the movie, is a good recreation of the naval battle at Actium in 31.

Gladiator. Universal, 2000. Set in the Roman Empire in 180 C.E., the opening battle sequence is one of the best ever filmed.

Helen of Troy. Warner Brothers, 1955.

Masada. MCA/Universal, 1981. Television miniseries chronicling the Roman attack on the fortress of Masada in Israel (72–73 C.E.). Illustrates Roman effectiveness in siege warfare.

Rome. HBO, 2005–2007. Miniseries (22 episodes) that covers the last 21 years of the Roman Republic (52–31 B.C.E.). Some good battle scenes, especially the recreation of Philippi (42) and of Caesar's campaign in Gaul (52), which clearly show the sophistication of the Roman army and its ability to rotate its soldiers to keep them fresh in battle. Numerous interesting scenes depicting Roman army life.

Spartacus. Universal, 1960. Focuses on the slave revolt of Spartacus against Rome (73–71 B.C.E.). The climactic battle scene is probably the best produced by Hollywood; filmed in Spain, it made use of 6,000 Spanish soldiers costumed as Romans or slaves. This makes it more realistic than scenes made with computer-generated images.

Ten Commandments. Paramount, 1956. One good scene showing Rameses II leading his cavalry corps.

The Odyssey. American Zoetrope, 1997. Television miniseries that is generally accurate for the ancient myths and the early Archaic Age, right down to the dirt floors and the animals in Odysseus's palace.

The 300 Spartans. 20th Century Fox, 1962. Focuses on the Battle of Thermopylae (480 B.C.E.). A number of good battle scenes illustrate the huge advantage the heavily armed *hoplites* had over the lightly armed Persians. Filmed in Greece. Inspired the comic book, which in turn inspired the 2006 movie *300*.

300. Warner Brothers, 2006. Though entertaining, not necessarily accurate historically. Some interesting scenes concerning the Spartan military system, for example, and, though the battle scenes are meant to be cartoonish, they may actually be closer to reality in terms of the blood and violence, since more realistic movies often have to tone down these scenes.

Troy. Warner Brothers, 2004. An entertaining film with exciting battle sequences that are not necessarily historically accurate or faithful to Homer.

Ulysses. Fox Lorber, 1954.

WEB SITES

www.perseus.tufts.edu. This site has numerous translations of ancient Greek and Roma authors.

The writings of most ancient authors are now on the Internet. A search using the author's name usually turns up not only an English translation but in some cases the original Latin or ancient Greek text.

Index

Entries include brief information as to time and place of subject. For persons, dates included are for lifetime (descending years means B.C.E., ascending years indicates C.E.), or for time of death when known. In the case of many Roman generals their highest political office was the consulship. Usually the year they were consul is included at which time they would usually be in their early forties. The dates accompanying consulships are always B.C.E. An "r." indicates the years during which a monarch reigned.

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